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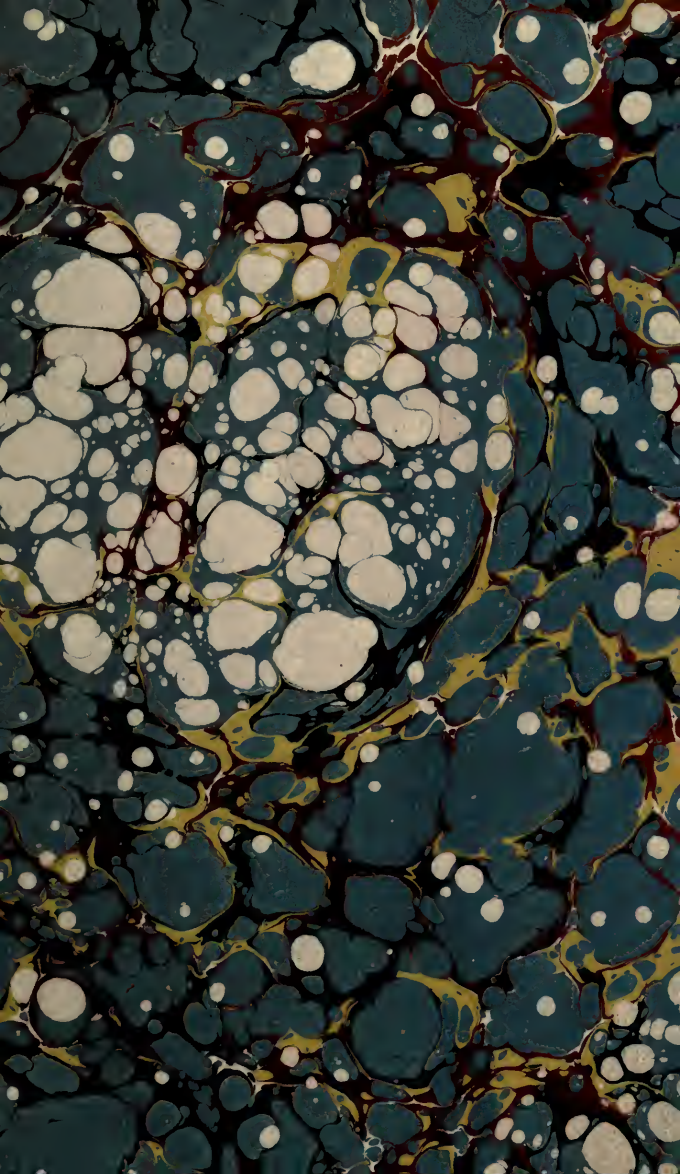

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REV. W. LUCAS COLLINS, M.A.

AUTHOR OF

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EDINBURGH AND LONDON

1870.—REPRINT, 1877

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ADVERTISEMENT.

This volume of the Series was to have been undertaken by the late Mr Conington. None can be more sensible than the present writer of the loss which all readers have sustained in the substitution rendered necessary by his lamented death.

The Editor begs to acknowledge the courteous permission of Mr Conington's representatives and publishers to make full extracts from his admirable version of the Æneid.

INTRODUCTION.

VIRGIL has always been, for one reason or other, the most popular of all the old classical writers. His poems were a favourite study with his own countrymen, even in his own generation; within fifty years of his death they were admitted to the very questionable honour, which they have retained ever since, of serving as a text-book for schoolboys. The little Romans studied their Æneid, from their master's dictation, as regularly, and probably with quite as much appreciation of its beauties, as the fourth form of an English public school, and wrote "declamations" of some kind upon its heroes. In the middle ages, when Greek literature had become almost a deserted field, and Homer in the original was a sealed book even to those who considered themselves and were considered scholars, Virgil was still the favourite with young and old. The monks in their chronicles, philosophers in their secular studies, enlivened their pages with quotations from the one author with whom no man of letters would venture to confess himself wholly unacquainted. The

works of Virgil had passed through above forty editions in Europe before the first printed edition of Homer appeared from the Florence press in 1448. He has been translated, imitated, and parodied in all the chief European languages. The fate of Dido, of Pallas, and of Euryalus, has drawn tears from successive generations of which the poet never dreamed.

In the middle ages his fame underwent a singular transformation. From the magic power of song the transition seems incongruous to the coarser material agency of the wizard. But so it was; Virgilius the poet became, in mediæval legends, Virgilius the magician. One of his Eclogues (the Eighth), in which are introduced the magical charms by which it is sought to reclaim a wandering lover, is supposed to have given the first impulse to this superstitious belief. All kinds of marvels were attributed to his agency. It was said that he built at Rome, for the Emperor Augustus, a wondrous tower, in which were set up emblematic figures of all the subject nations which acknowledged the imperial rule, each with a bell in its hand, which rang out whenever war or revolt broke out in that particular province, so that Rome knew at once in what direction to march her legions. In the same building—so the legend ran—he contrived a magic mirror, in which the enemies of the Empire could be seen when they appeared in arms; and another—surely the most terrible agency that was ever imagined in the way of domestic police—in which the guilt of any Roman citizen could be at once seen and detected. A fount of perpetual fire, and salt-springs of medicinal

virtue, were said to have been the gifts of the great enchanter to the Roman populace. At Naples the marvels which were attributed to his agency were scarcely less; and even now there is scarcely any useful or ornamental public work of early date, in the neighbourhood of that city, which is not in some way connected by vulgar tradition with the name of Virgil. The wondrous powers thus ascribed to him were, according to some legends, conferred upon him by Chiron the learned centaur—by whom the great Achilles, and the poet's own hero, Æneas, were said to have been educated; by others, with that blending of pagan belief with Christian which is so commonly found in mediæval writers, they were referred to direct communication with the Evil One.*

French scholars have always had the highest appreciation of the Augustan poet, and his popularity

* One story of this kind is perhaps curious enough for insertion. Virgil is said to have been startled one day by a voice calling to him out of a small hole in a cave. It proceeded from an Evil Spirit who had been conjured into that place of confinement, and who undertook to show Virgil certain books of necromancy on condition of his release. The bargain was made, and the condition fulfilled. "He stood before Virgil like a mighty man, whereof Virgil was afraid; and he marvelled greatly that so great a man might come out of so little a hole. Then said Virgil, 'Should ye well pass through the hole that ye came out of?' And he said, 'Yes.' 'I hold the best pledge that I have that ye cannot do it.' The devill said, 'I consent thereto.' And then the devill wrang himself into the little hole again. And when he was in, then Virgil closed him there again, so that he had no power to come out again, but there abideth still."—['Of the Lyfe of Virgilius and his deth, and the many marvaylcs that he dyd.']

in England is to this day as great as ever. Even a practical House of Commons, not always very patient of argument, and notoriously impatient of some prosaic speakers, will listen to a quotation from Virgil — especially when pointed against a political opponent. Those to whom his rolling measure is familiar still quote him and cheer him so enthusiastically, that others listen with more or less appreciation. To the many who have almost forgotten what they once knew of him, his lines awake reminiscences of their youth— which are always pleasant: while even those to whom he is a sound and nothing more, listen as with a kind of sacred awe. The debates of our reformed Parliament will certainly be duller, if ever Virgil comes to be proscribed as an unknown tongue.

English translators of Virgil have abounded. But the earliest and by no means the least able of those who presented the Roman poet to our northern islanders in their own vernacular was a Scotsman, Bishop Gawain Douglas of Dunkeld, that clerkly son of old Archibald "Bell-the-Cat" whom Scott names in his 'Marmion.' Few modern readers of Virgil are likely to be proficients in the ancient northern dialect which the bishop used; but those who can appreciate him maintain that there is considerable vigour as well as faithfulness in his version. Thomas Phaer, a Welsh physician, was the next who made the attempt, in the long verses known as Alexandrine, in 1558. A few years later came forth what might fairly be called the comic English version, though undertaken in the most serious earnest by the

translator. This was Richard Stanyhurst, an Irishman, a graduate of Oxford and student of Lincoln's Inn. He seems to have been the original prophet of that "pestilent heresy," as Lord Derby calls it, the making of English hexameters; for that was the metre which he chose, and he congratulates himself in his preface upon "having no English writer before him in this kind of poetry." Without going so far as to endorse Lord Derby's severe judgment, it may be confessed that Stanyhurst did his best to justify it. His translation, which he ushered into public with the most profound self-satisfaction, is quite curious enough to account for its reprint by the "Edinburgh Printing Society" in 1836. One of the points upon which he prides himself is the suiting the sound to the sense, which Virgil himself has done happily enough in some rare passages. So when he has to translate the line,

"Exoritur clamorque virum clangorque tubarum,"

he does it as follows:—

"The townsmen roared, the trump tara-tantara rattled."

When he has to express the Cyclops forging the thunderbolts, it is

"With peale meale ramping, with thick thwack sturdily thund'ring;"

and very much more of the same kind.

The Earl of Surrey and James Harrington tried their hand at detached portions, and although the quaint conceits which were admired in their day have little charm for the modern reader, there is not want-

ing, especially in the former, a spirit and vigour in which some of those who came before and after them lamentably failed. The translations by Vicars and Ogilby, about the middle of the seventeenth century, have little claim to be remembered except as the first presentations of the whole Æneid in an English poetical dress. In dull mediocrity they are about equal.

In 1697, Dryden, at the age of sixty-six, finished and published his translation; written, as he pathetically says, "in his declining years, struggling with want, and oppressed with sickness;" yet, whatever be its shortcomings, a confessedly great work, and showing few traces of these unfavourable circumstances. His great renown, and the unquestionable vigour and ability of the versification, insured its popularity at once; and it was considered, by the critics of his own and some succeeding generations, as pre-eminently the English Virgil. Dr Johnson said of it that "it satisfied his friends and silenced his enemies." It may still be read with pleasure, but it has grave faults. Independently of its general looseness and diffuseness, in many passages amounting to the vaguest paraphrase, there are too many instances in which, not content with making his author say a good many things which he never did say, he palpably misinterprets him. There are many passages of much vigour and beauty; but even of these it has been said, and not unfairly, by a later translator, Dr Trapp, that "where you most admire Dryden, you see the least of Virgil." Dryden had the advantage of consulting in manuscript a translation by the Earl of Lauderdale

(afterwards published), which has considerable merit, and to which in his preface he confesses obligations "not inconsiderable." They were, in fact, so considerable as this, that besides other hints in the matter of words and phrases, he borrowed nearly four hundred lines in different places, with scarcely an attempt at change.

Dryden was followed by various other translators more or less successful. Pitt and Symmons, the latter especially, might have earned a greater reputation had they preceded instead of followed the great poet whose laurels they plainly challenged by adopting his metre. But the recent admirable translation of the Æneid into the metre of Scott by Mr Conington will undoubtedly take its place henceforward as by far the most poetical, as it is also the most faithful and scholarly, rendering of the original.

THE POET.

PUBLIUS VIRGILIUS MARO—such was his full name, though we have abbreviated the sounding Roman appellatives into the curt English form of "Virgil"—lived in the age when the great Roman Empire was culminating to its fall, but as yet showed little symptom of decay. The emperor under whom he was born was that Octavianus Cæsar, nephew of the great Julius, whose title of "Augustus" gave a name to his own times which has since passed into a common term for the golden age of literature in every nation. In the Augustan age of Rome rose and flourished, in rapid succession, a large proportion of those great writers to whose works we have given the name of classics. This brilliant summer-time of literature was owing to various causes—to the increase of cultivation and refinement, to the leisure and quiet which followed after long years of war and civil commotion; but in part also it was owing to the character of the Roman emperor himself. Both Augustus and his intimate

friend and counsellor Mæcenas were the professed patrons of letters and of the fine arts. Mæcenas was of the highest patrician blood of Rome. He claimed descent from the old Etruscan kings or Lucumos—those ancient territorial chiefs who ruled Italy while Rome was yet in her infancy, such as Lars Porsena of Clusium. Clever and accomplished, an able statesman in spite of all his indolence, Mæcenas had immense influence with Augustus. At his splendid palace on the Esquiline Hill—the Holland House of the day—met all the brilliant society of Rome, and his name very soon became a synonym for a liberal patron of art and literature. To be eminent in any branch of these accomplishments was to insure the notice of the minister; and to be a *protégé* of his was an introduction at once, under the happiest auspices, to the emperor himself. Such good fortune occurred to Virgil early in his life.

He was born in the little village of Andes (probably the modern Pietola), near Mantua, and received a liberal education, as is sufficiently evident from the many allusions in his poems. When grown to manhood, he seems to have lived for some years with his father upon his modest family estate. He suffered, like very many of his countrymen—his friend and fellow-poet Horace among the number—from the results of the great civil wars which so long desolated Italy, and which ended in the fall of the Republic at the battle of Philippi. The district near Mantua was assigned and parcelled out among the legionaries who had fought for Antony and young

Octavianus against Pompey. Cremona had espoused the cause of the latter, and Mantua, as Virgil himself tells us, suffered for the sins of its neighbour. His little estate was confiscated, amongst others, to reward the veterans who had claims on the gratitude of Octavianus. But through the intercession of some powerful friend who had influence with the young emperor—probably Asinius Pollio, hereafter mentioned, who was prefect of the province—they were soon restored to him. This obligation Virgil never forgot; and amongst the many of all ranks who poured their flattery into the ears of Augustus (as Octavianus must be henceforth called), perhaps that of the young Mantuan poet, though bestowed with something of a poet's exaggeration, was amongst the most sincere. The first of his Pastorals was written to express his gratitude for the indulgence which had been granted him. If the Cæsar of the day was susceptible of flattery, at least he liked it good of its kind. "Stroke him awkwardly," said Horace, "and he winces like a restive horse." But the verse of the Mantuan poet had the ring of poetry as well as compliment.

These Pastorals (to be more particularly noticed hereafter) were his earliest work, composed, probably, between his twenty-seventh and thirty-fourth year, while he was still living a country life on his newly-recovered farm. They seem to have attracted the favourable attention of Mæcenas; and soon, among the brilliant crowd of courtiers, statesmen, artists, poets, and historians who thronged the audience-chamber of the popular minister, might be seen the

tall, slouching, somewhat plebeian figure of the young country poet.* He soon became a familiar guest there; but although Augustus himself, half in jest, was said to have spoken of his minister's literary dinners as a "table of parasites," it is certain Virgil never deserved the character. This intimacy with Mæcenas must have led to frequent and prolonged visits to Rome; but his chief residence, after he left his Mantuan estate, seems to have been at Naples. It was at the suggestion of this patron that he set about the composition of his poem upon Roman agriculture and stock-breeding—the four books of Georgics. His greatest and best-known work—the Æneid—was begun in obedience to a hint thrown out by a still higher authority, though he seems to have long had the subject in his thoughts, and probably had begun to put it into shape. Augustus had condescended to ask the poet to undertake some grander theme than an imaginary pastoral life or the management of the country farm. The result was the Æneid, modelled upon the two great poems of Homer—in fact, a Roman Iliad and Odyssey combined in one. It was never completely finished, for Virgil, whose health was at no time robust, died before he had put in the finishing touches which his fastidious taste required. It is even said that in his last illness he would have burnt the copy, if his friends would have allowed the sacrifice. It is hardly

* It has been thought that the friend of whom Horace speaks (Sat. I. 3, 31), under whose somewhat slovenly dress and rustic bearing lay hid so much talent and worth, may have been Virgil.

probable, as a German scholar has ingeniously suggested, that it was because the cruelties of Augustus's later years made him repent of having immortalised a tyrant. He died in his fifty-first year, at Brundusium, where he had landed in the suite of the emperor, whom he had met during a visit to Athens, and who brought him back with him to Italy. He was buried, as was the custom of the Romans, by the side of the public road leading out of Naples to Puteoli; and the tomb still shown to travellers, near Posilippo, as the last resting-place of the poet, may at least mark the real site. He died a comparatively rich man, possessed of a town-house at Rome, near the palace of Mæcenas, with a good library. Living, as he did, in the highest society of the capital, where he was very popular, he never forgot his old friends; and it is pleasant to read that he sent money to his aged parents regularly every year. So highly was he esteemed by his own contemporaries, that on one occasion when he visited the theatre, the whole audience is said to have risen in a body and saluted him with the same honours which were paid to Augustus. He preserved to the last his simple manners and somewhat rustic appearance; and it is believed that his character, amongst all the prevalent vices of Rome, remained free from reproach—saving only that with which he was taunted by the libertines of the capital, the reproach of personal purity. It is as much to his honour that Caligula should have ordered all his busts to be banished from the public libraries, as that St Augustin should have quoted him alone of heathen authors, in his celebrated 'Confessions.'

THE PASTORALS.

THE earliest written poems of Virgil, as has been said, were his Pastorals. Of these we have ten remaining, sometimes called "Bucolics"—*i. e.*, Songs of the Herdsmen — and sometimes "Eclogues," as being "selections" from a larger number of similar compositions which the poet either never made public, or which at least are lost to us. The actual subjects of these poems are various, but they are usually introduced in the way of imaginary dialogue between Greek shepherds, keeping their flocks and herds at pasture in some imaginary woodland country, which the poet peoples with inhabitants and supplies with scenery at his will; mixing up, as poets only may, the features of his own Italian landscape with those of Sicily, borrowed, with much besides, from the Idylls of Theocritus, and with reminiscences of the Greek Arcadia. That pastoral faery-land, in which shepherds lay all day under beech-trees, playing on their pipes, either in rivalry for a musical prize or composing monodies on their lost loves, surely never existed in fact, how-

ever familiar to us in the language of ancient and modern poets. Such shepherds are as unreal as the satyrs and fauns and dryad-nymphs with whom a fanciful mythology had peopled the same region, and who are not unfrequently introduced by the pastoral poets in the company of their human *dramatis personæ*. The Arcadia of history was a rich and fertile district, well wooded and watered, and as prosaic as one of our own midland counties. Like them, if it had any reputation at all beyond that of being excellent pasture-ground, it was a reputation for dulness. It was celebrated for its breed of asses, and some of the qualities of the animal seem to have been shared by the natives themselves. "A slip of Arcadia" passed into a proverbial nickname for a boy who was the despair of his schoolmaster. The Arcadia of the poets and romance-writers, from classical times down to our own Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney, was, as Mr Conington says, "the poets' golden land, in which imagination found a refuge from the harsh prosaic life of the present." This literary fancy enjoyed a remarkable popularity from the early days of authorship down to a very recent date. Thyrsis and Amaryllis, Daphnis and Corydon, have had a continued poetical existence of something like fifteen hundred years, and talk very much the same language in the Pastorals of Pope that they did in the Greek Idylls. It is curious, also, that when society itself has been most artificial, this affectation of pastoral simplicity seems to have been most in vogue. It was the effeminate courtiers of Augustus who lavished their applause and rewards upon Virgil when

he read to them these lays of an imaginary shepherd-life; how Galatæa was won by a present of a pair of wood-pigeons or a basket of apples, and how Melibœus thankfully went to supper with his friend Tityrus on roasted chestnuts and goat-milk cheese. Society in England had never less of the reality of pastoral simplicity than in the days when nearly every fine lady chose to be painted with a lamb or a crook—when the "bucolic cant," as Warton contemptuously terms it, was the fashionable folly of the day. So when aristocratic life in France had reached a phase of corruption which was only to be purged by a revolution, Queen Marie Antoinette, with her ladies and gentlemen in waiting, were going about the farm at Trianon with crooks in their hands, playing at shepherds and shepherdesses, on the brink of that terrible volcano.

Of the ten Eclogues, the majority take the form of pastoral dialogue. Frequently it is a singing-match between two rival shepherds—not always conducted in the most amicable fashion, or with the most scrupulous delicacy in the matter of repartee, the poetical "Arcadian" being in this point a pretty faithful copy from nature. Most of the names, as well as of the subjects and imagery, are taken, as has been said, from the Greek Idylls of Theocritus. So closely has Virgil copied his model that he even transplants the natural scenery of Sicily, employed by Theocritus, to his pastoral dreamland, which otherwise would seem to be localised on the banks of the Mincio, in the neighbourhood of his native Mantua. This gives him an

opportunity of touching upon subjects of the day, and introducing, in the name and guise of shepherds, himself and his friends. Sometimes we can see through the disguise by the help of contemporary Roman history; more often, probably, the clue is lost to us through our very imperfect modern knowledge. We know pretty well that Tityrus,—who in the First Eclogue expresses his gratitude to the "godlike youth" who has preserved his little farm from the ruthless hands of the soldier colonists, while his poor neighbour Melibœus has lost his all,—can be no other than the poet himself, who thus compliments his powerful protector. So, too, in a later Eclogue, when the slave Mœris meets his neighbour Lycidas on the road, and tells him how his master has been dispossessed of his farm by the military colonists, and has narrowly escaped with his life, we may safely trust the traditional explanation, that in the master Menalcas we have Virgil again, troubled a second time by these intruders, and compelled to renew his application to his great friend at Rome. The traditional story was, that the poet was obliged to take refuge from the violence of the soldiers in the shop of a charcoal-burner, who let him out at a back-door, and eventually had to throw himself into the river Mincio to escape their pursuit. Lycidas, in the Pastoral, is surprised to hear of his neighbour's new trouble.

"Lyc.—I surely heard, that all from where yon hills
Begin to rise, and gently slope again
Down to the stream, where the old beech-trees
throw

Their ragged time-worn tops against the sky,*
Your poet-master had redeemed by song.

MŒR.—You heard, no doubt—and so the story went;
But song, good Lycidas, avails as much,
When swords are drawn, as might the trembling dove
When on Dodona swoops the eagle down.
Nay—had I not been warned of woes to come—
Warned by a raven's croak on my left hand
From out the hollow oak—why then, my friend,
You had lost your Mœris and his master too."

Honest Lycidas expresses his horror at the narrow escape of the neighbourhood from such a catastrophe. What should they all have done for a poet, if they had lost Menalcas? who could compose such songs—and who could sing them? And he breaks out himself into fragmentary reminiscences which he has picked up by ear from his friend. Then Mœris too—who, being a poet's farm-servant, has caught a little of the inspiration—repeats a few lines of his master's. "As you hope for any blessings," says Lycidas, "let me hear the rest of it."

"So may your bees avoid the poisonous yew—
So may your cows bring full-swoln udders home—
If canst remember aught, begin at once. I too,
I am a poet, by the Muses' grace: some songs
I have, mine own composing; and the swains
Call me their bard—but I were weak to heed them.
I cannot vie with masters of the art

* It is not difficult to believe that in the old time-worn beeches overhanging the stream we have the actual landscape of the poet's farm.

Like Varius or like Cinna ; my poor Muse
Is but a goose among the tuneful swans."

Mœris can remember a scrap or two of his master's verses. There was one in particular, which Lycidas had heard him singing one moonlight night, and would much like to hear again ;—"I can remember the tune myself," he says, "but I have forgotten the words." Mœris will try. The compliment to Augustus with which the strain begins sufficiently marks the real poet who here figures as Menalcas.

"Why, Daphnis, why dost watch the constellations
Of the old order, now the new is born ?
Lo ! a new star comes forth to glad the nations,
Star of the Cæsars, filling full the corn." *

But Mœris cannot remember much more. They must both wait, he says, until his master comes home again. So the pair walk on together towards Rome, cheating the long journey with singing as they go ; and thus closes this pretty pastoral dialogue, the graceful ease of which, with its subdued comedy, it would be impossible for any translator to render adequately.

Another of these Eclogues relates the capture of Silenus, one of the old rural deities of very jovial reputation, by two young shepherds, while he lay sleeping off the effect of yesterday's debauch. He is com-

* Probably the comet which appeared after Julius Cæsar's death, and which the poet takes to announce a new era of peace and happiness for Rome. The English reader may remember that a new star was said to have appeared at the accession of Charles II., from which equally happy auguries were drawn—and were equally disappointed.

monly represented—and he was rather a favourite subject with ancient artists—as a corpulent bald-headed old man, riding upon an ass, in a state of evident inebriety, carrying a capacious leather wine-bottle, and led and followed by a company of Nymphs and Bacchanals. He had the reputation, like the sea-god Proteus, of knowing the mysteries of nature and the secrets of the future; and there was a current story, upon which this Pastoral is founded, of his having been caught while asleep, like him, by some shepherds in Phrygia, and carried to King Midas, to whom, as the price of his release, he answered all questions in natural philosophy and ancient history—just as Proteus unfolded to Menelaus, under similar compulsion, the secret of his future fate.

The Pastoral into which Virgil introduces this story is addressed to his friend Varus—a man evidently of high rank—and seems meant as an apology for not complying with his request to write a poem on his exploits.

"I thought to sing how heroes fought and bled,
But that Apollo pinched my ear, and said—
'Shepherds, friend Tityrus, I would have you know,
Feed their sheep high, and keep their verses low.'"

Then he goes on to tell his story:—

"Two shepherd-youths, the story runs, one day
Came on the cave where old Silenus lay;
Filled to the skin, as was his wont to be,
With last night's wine, and sound asleep was he;
The garland from his head had fallen aside,
And his round bottle hanging near they spied.

Now was their time—both had been cheated long
By the sly god with promise of a song;
They tied him fast—fit bonds his garland made—
And lo! a fair accomplice comes to aid:
Loveliest of Naiad-nymphs, and merriest too,
Æglè* did what they scarce had dared to do;
Just as the god unclosed his sleepy eyes,
She daubed his face with blood of mulberries.
He saw their joke, and laughed—'Now loose me, lad!
Enough—you've caught me—tying is too bad.
A song you want?—Here goes. For Æglè, mind,
I warrant me I'll pay her out in kind.'
So he began. The listening Fauns drew near,
The beasts beat time, the stout oaks danced to hear.
So joys Parnassus when Apollo sings—
So through the dancing hills the lyre of Orpheus rings.'

Silenus's strain is a poetical lecture on natural philosophy. He is as didactic in his waking soberness as some of his disciples are in their cups. He describes how the world sprang from the four original elements, and narrates the old fables of the cosmogonists—the Deluge of Deucalion, the new race of men who sprang from the stones which he and Pyrrha cast behind them, the golden reign of Saturn, the theft of fire by Prometheus, and a long series of other legends, with which he charms his listeners until the falling shadows warn them to count their flocks, and the evening-star comes out, as the poet phrases it, "over the unwilling heights of Olympus"—loath yet to lose the fascinating strain.

Besides this Pastoral addressed to Varus, there are

* *Anglicè*, "Bright-eyes."

three inscribed to other friends: one to Cornelius Gallus, and two to Caius Asinius Pollio, who was among the most eminent men of his day alike as a statesman, an orator, and a man of letters, and at that time held the high office of consul at Rome. He had been the friend of the great Julius, as he was afterwards of his nephew Octavianus (Augustus), and was probably the person who preserved or restored to the poet his country estate. The fourth in order of these poems, commonly known as the "Pollio," is the most celebrated of the whole series, and has given rise to a great amount of speculation. Its exact date is known from the record of Pollio's consulship—40 before the Christian era. Its subject is the expected birth of a Child, in whom the golden age of innocence and happiness should be restored, and who was to be the moral regenerator of the world. The date of the poem itself, approaching so closely the great Birth at Bethlehem—the reference to the prophecy of the Cumæan Sibyl, long supposed to be a voice from heathendom predictive of the Jewish Messiah—and the remarkable coincidence of the metaphorical terms employed by the poet with the prophetical language of the Old Testament, have led many to the pious belief that the Roman poet did but put into shape those vague expectations of a Great Deliverer which were current in his day, and which were to have a higher fulfilment than he knew. The "Pollio" may be familiar to many English readers who are unacquainted with the original through Pope's fine imitation of it in his poem of "The Messiah," first published anonymously in the

'Spectator.'* But as the Latin Eclogue itself is short, it may be well to attempt a translation of it here, before remarking further upon its meaning.

"Muses of Sicily, lift me for once
To higher flight; our humble tamarisk groves
Delight not all; and though the fields and woods
Still bound my song, give me the skill to make
Fit music for a Roman consul's ear.
"Comes the Last Age, of which the Sibyl sang—
A new-born cycle of the rolling years;
Justice returns to earth, the rule returns
Of good King Saturn;—lo! from the high heavens
Comes a new seed of men. Lucina chaste,
Speed the fair infant's birth, with whom shall end
Our age of iron, and the golden prime
Of earth return; thine own Apollo's reign
In him begins anew. This glorious age
Inaugurates, O Pollio, with thee;
Thy consulship shall date the happy months;
Under thine auspices the Child shall purge
Our guilt-stains out, and free the land from dread.
He with the gods and heroes like the gods
Shall hold familiar converse, and shall rule
With his great father's spirit the peaceful world.
For thee, O Child, the earth untilled shall pour
Her early gifts,—the winding ivy's wreath,
Smiling acanthus, and all flowers that blow.
She-goats undriven shall bring full udders home,
The herds no longer fear the lion's spring;
The ground beneath shall cradle thee in flowers,
The venomed snake shall die, the poisonous herb
Perish from out thy path, and leave the almond there.
"But when with growing years the Child shall learn
The old heroic glories of his race,

* No. 378.

And know what Honour means: then shall the plains
Glow with the yellow harvest silently,
The grape hang blushing from the tangled brier,
And the rough oak drip honey like a dew.
Yet shall some evil leaven of the old strain
Lurk still unpurged; still men shall tempt the deep
With restless oar, gird cities with new walls,
And cleave the soil with ploughshares; yet again
Another Argo bear her hero-crew,
Another Tiphys steer: still wars shall be,
A new Achilles for a second Troy.

"So, when the years shall seal thy manhood's strength,
The busy merchant shall forsake the seas—
Barter there shall not need; the soil shall bear
For all men's use all products of all climes.
The glebe shall need no harrow, nor the vine
The searching knife, the oxen bear no yoke;
The wool no longer shall be schooled to lie,
Dyed in false hues; but, colouring as he feeds,
The ram himself in the rich pasture-lands
Shall wear a fleece now purple and now gold,
And the lambs grow in scarlet. So the Fates
Who know not change have bid their spindles run,
And weave for this blest age the web of doom.

"Come, claim thine honours, for the time draws nigh,
Babe of immortal race, the wondrous seed of Jove!
Lo, at thy coming how the starry spheres
Are moved to trembling, and the earth below,
And widespread seas, and the blue vault of heaven!
How all things joy to greet the rising Age!
If but my span of life be stretched to see
Thy birth, and breath remain to sing thy praise,
Not Thracian Orpheus should o'ermatch my strain,
Nor Linus,—though each parent helped the son,
Phœbus Apollo and the Muse of Song:
Though in Arcadia Pan my rival stood,

His own Arcadia should pronounce for me.
How soon, fair infant, shall thy first smile greet
Thy happy mother, when the slow months crown
The heart-sick hopes that waited for thy birth?
Smile then, O Babe! so shall she smile on thee;
The child on whom no parent's smile hath beamed,
No god shall entertain, nor goddess love."

It would be out of place here to discuss the various conjectures of the learned as to who the Child was, to whose birth the poet thus looks forward. Whether it was a son of the Consul Pollio himself, who died in his infancy; or the expected offspring of Augustus's marriage with Scribonia, which was, after all, a daughter—Julia—whose profligate life and unhappy death were a sad contradiction of Virgil's anticipations; or a child of Octavia, sister of Augustus;—which of these it was, or whether it was any one of them, neither ancient nor modern commentators have been able to decide. "It is not certain," says Mr Conington, "that the child ever was born; it is certain that, if born, he did not become the regenerator of his time." It is possible, too, that the whole form of the poem may be strictly imaginary—that the child had been born already, long ago, and that it was no other than Octavianus Cæsar—and that Virgil does but use here the licence of poetry to express his hopes of a golden age that might follow the peace of Brundusium. And as to how far this very remarkable poem may or may not be regarded as one of what Archbishop Trench has called "the unconscious prophecies of heathendom," would be to open a field of inquiry of the

highest interest indeed, but far too wide for these pages. Yet it cannot be entirely passed over.

The Sibylline oracles, to which Virgil alludes in his opening lines, whatever their original form, were so garbled and interpolated, both in Christian and pre-Christian times, that it is impossible now to know what they did or did not contain. But they were recognised, in the early Church — by the Emperor Constantine, who is said to have attributed his own conversion in great part to their study, and by St Augustine, amongst others—as containing distinct prophecies of the Messiah. The recognition of the Roman Sibyl or Sibyls as bearing their testimony to the truth of Christianity is still familiar to us in the ancient hymn, "Dies Iræ,"—so often translated—

"Teste David cum Sibylla;"

and in an old Latin mystery-play of the eleventh century, when the witnesses are summoned to give evidence as to the Nativity, there appear among them, in company with the Hebrew prophets, Virgil and the Sibyl, who both join in a general "*Benedicamus Domino*" at the end. St Augustine quotes twenty-seven Latin verses (which, however, seem very fragmentary and unconnected) as actual utterances of the Sibyl of Erythræ, which contain prophecies, more or less clear, of the great Advent. The original, he says, was in Greek, and the initial letters of each verse formed a sentence, "Jesus Christ the Son of God the Saviour."* Whatever truth there may be in any

* ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΕΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ. He also quotes

special predictions of this nature as existing in the heathen world, it is at least certain that there prevailed very largely, about the date of the Christian era, a vague expectation of some personal advent which should in some way regenerate society.

The new "cycle of centuries," which the poet supposes to begin with the birth of the Child, refers to the doctrine held by Plato and his disciples (possibly of Etruscan origin) of an "Annus Magnus," or Great Year. It was believed that there were certain recurring periods at long intervals, in which the history of the world repeated itself.* A curious story in illustration of this belief is told by Plutarch in his life of Sulla.

"While the horizon was clear and cloudless, there was heard suddenly the sound of a trumpet, shrill, prolonged, and as it were wailing, so that all men were startled and awed by its loudness. The Etruscan soothsayers declared that it foreboded the coming of a new generation and the revolution of the world. For that there were eight generations of man in all, differing from each other in habits and ways of life, and each had its allotted space of time, when heaven brought round again the recurrence of the Great Year, and that when the end of one and the rise of another was at hand, some wondrous sign appeared in earth or heaven."—PLUTARCH, Sulla, c. 7.

Enough has perhaps been said to give some idea of the genius and character of Virgil's pastoral poetry.

other "Sibylline" verses from the Greek of Lactantius, referring to the crucifixion.—De Civ. Dei, xviii. 23.

* The duration is variously estimated—from 2489 to 18,000 years. See Conington's note.

It laid the foundation of a taste which was long prevalent in European literature, but which may be said to have now become obsolete. English poets were at one time strongly imbued with it. Spenser, Milton, Drayton, Pope, and Ambrose Phillips,—the last perhaps the most successful,—were all more or less imitators of Virgil in this line of poetry. But it would seem to require a more than ordinary revolution in literature ever to bring such a style into popularity again.

THE GEORGICS.

THE Georgics of Virgil, like his Pastorals, are a direct and confessed imitation from Greek originals. The poem of Hesiod—"Works and Days"—which has come down to us, though apparently in an incomplete form, gives a mythological sketch of the early history of the world, with its five ages of the human race—the gold, the silver, the brazen, "the age of heroes," and the present—which last, with the cynicism or melancholy which seems so inseparable from the poetic temperament, Hesiod looks upon as hopelessly degenerate, with the prospect of something even worse to come. To this traditional cosmogony the Greek poet adds directions as to farm operations in their several seasons, and notes of lucky and unlucky days. Virgil has borrowed from him largely on these two latter subjects. He is also considerably indebted to other Greek writers less known to us, and in whose case, therefore, his obligations are not so readily traced.

From his own countryman and immediate predecessor, Lucretius, the author of the great didactic poem

"On the Nature of Things," he drew quite as largely, but in another field. Virgil is said to have been born on the very day of Lucretius's death, and he had an intense admiration for both his diction and his philosophy. There are passages in Virgil's writings which would seem to show that his greatest ambition would have been to have sung, like Lucretius, of the secrets of nature, rather than either of heroic legends or of country life. And here and there, throughout these books of Georgics, wherever he has the opportunity, he forgets the farmer in the natural philosopher, and breaks off in the midst of some practical precepts to indulge in speculations on the hidden causes of nature's operations, which would have sorely puzzled a Roman country gentleman or his bailiff, if we could suppose that the work was really composed with a view to their practical instruction.

He addresses his poem to his noble patron Mæcenas. And amongst the long list of divine powers whom, as the guardians of fields and flocks, he invokes to aid his song, he introduces the present Autocrat of Rome.

"Thou, Cæsar, chief, where'er thy choice ordain,
To fix 'mid gods thy yet unchosen reign—
Wilt thou o'er cities stretch thy guardian sway,
While earth and all her realms thy nod obey?
The world's vast orb shall own thy genial power,
Giver of fruits, fair sun, and favouring shower;
Before thy altar grateful nations bow,
And with maternal myrtle wreathe thy brow.
O'er boundless ocean shall thy power prevail,
Thee her sole lord the world of waters hail?

Rule, where the sea remotest Thule laves,
While Tethys dowers thy bride with all her waves?
Wilt thou 'mid Scorpius and the Virgin rise,
And, a new star, illume thy native skies?
Scorpius, e'en now, each shrinking claw confines,
And more than half his heaven to thee resigns.
Where'er thy reign (for not if hell invite
To wield the sceptre of eternal night,
Ne'er would such lust of dire dominion move
Thee, Cæsar, to resign the realm of Jove:
Though vaunting Greece extol th' Elysian plain,
Whence weeping Ceres wooes her child in vain)
Breathe favouring gales, my course propitious guide,
O'er the rude swain's uncertain path preside;
Now, now invoked, assert thy heavenly birth,
And learn to hear our prayers, a god on earth."

—SOTHEBY.

The first book is devoted to the raising of corn crops. The farmer is recommended to plough early, to plough deep, and to plough four times over—advice in the principles of which modern farmers would cordially agree. The poet also recommends fallows at least every other season, and not to take two corn crops in successive years. The Roman agriculturist had his pests of the farm, and complained of them as loudly as his modern fellows. The geese, and the cranes, and the mice, and the small birds, vexed him all in turn; and if he knew nothing of that distinctly English torment, the couch-grass,—squitch, twitch, or quitch, as it is variously termed, which is said to spring up under the national footstep wherever it goes, whether at the Cape or in Australia,—he had indigenous weeds of his own which gave him equal trouble to get rid of. The

Roman plough seems to have been a cumbrous wooden instrument, which would break the heart alike of man and horse in these days; and its very elaborate description, in spite of the polished language of the poet, would shock one of our modern implement-manufacturers. He gives a few hints as to lucky and unlucky days, and fuller directions for prognosticating the weather from the various signs to be observed in the sky, and in the behaviour of the animal world; and he closes this first division of his poem, as he began it, with an apostrophe to Cæsar as the hope of Rome and Italy. It is one of the finest passages in the Georgics, and will bear translation as well as most. Dryden's version is spirited enough, and though diffuse, presents the sense fairly to an English ear:—

"Ye home-born deities, of mortal birth!
Thou, father Romulus, and mother Earth,
Goddess unmoved! whose guardian arms extend
O'er Tuscan Tiber's course, and Roman towers defend;
With youthful Cæsar your joint powers engage,
Nor hinder him to save the sinking age.
O! let the blood already spilt atone
For the past crimes of curst Laomedon!
Heaven wants thee there; and long the gods, we know,
Have grudged thee, Cæsar, to the world below;
Where fraud and rapine right and wrong confound;
Where impious arms from every part resound,
And monstrous crimes in every shape are crowned.
The peaceful peasant to the wars is prest;
The fields lie fallow in inglorious rest;
The plain no pasture to the flock affords,
The crooked scythes are straightened into swords:

And there Euphrates her soft offspring arms,
And here the Rhine rebellows with alarms;
The neighbouring cities range on several sides,
Perfidious Mars long-plighted leagues divides,
And o'er the wasted world in triumph rides.
So four fierce coursers, starting to the race,
Scour through the plain, and lengthen every pace:
Nor reins, nor curbs, nor threat'ning cries they fear,
But force along the trembling charioteer."

The Second Georgic treats of the orchard and the vineyard, but especially of the latter. The apple, the pear, the olive, all receive due notice from the poet; but upon the culture of the vine he dwells with a hearty enthusiasm, and his precepts have a more practical air than those which he gives out upon other branches of cultivation. The soil, the site, the best kinds to choose, the different modes of propagation, are all discussed with considerable minuteness. It would seem that in those earlier times, as now, the vintage had a more poetical aspect than even the harvest-field. The beauty of the crop, the merriment of the gatherers, the genial effects of the grape when it has gone through the usual process of conversion, gave, as is still the case in all wine-producing countries, a holiday character to the whole course of cultivation. All other important crops contribute in some way to supply the actual needs of life: the vine alone represents distinctly its enjoyments. And when, at the beginning of the book, the poet invokes the god of wine to inspire his song, he does it with a thorough heartiness of welcome which assures us that, however temperate his own habits might be, he had not

adopted any vow of total abstinence. Some of the ancient critics are said to have detected in Homer a taste for joviality, because in his verse he had always a kindly word for "the dark red wine:" they might have said the same of the writer of the Georgics. It is a cordial invitation which he gives to the jolly god:—

"Come, Father Bacchus, come! thy bounty fills
All things around; for thee the autumn hills,
Heavy with fruit, blush through their greenery;
In the full vats the vintage foams for thee:
Come, Father Bacchus, come! nor yet refuse
To doff thy buskins, and with noble juice
To stain thy limbs, and tread the grapes with me."

But although the poet makes the labours of the gardener and the vine-dresser the burden of his song, his most brilliant passages, and those best known and remembered, are the frequent digressions in which he breaks away from the lower ground of horticultural details into a higher poetical atmosphere. One of the most beautiful is his apostrophe to Italy in this second book:—

"Colchian bulls with fiery nostrils never turned Italian field,
Seed of hydra's teeth ne'er sprang in bristling crop of spear and shield;
But thy slopes with heavy corn-stalks and the Massic vine are clad,
There the olive-groves are greenest, and the full-fed herds are glad.
In thy plains is bred the war-horse, tossing high its crest of pride;
Milk-white herds, O fair Clitumnus, bathe them in thy sacred tide—

Mighty bulls to crown the altars, or to draw the conqueror's car
Up the Sacred Way in triumph when he rideth from the war.
Here the spring is longest, summer borrows months beyond her own;
Twice the teeming flocks are fruitful, twice the laden orchards groan.
In thy plains no tigers wander, nor the lions nurse their young;
Evil root of treacherous poison doth no wretched gatherer wrong,
Never serpent rears its crest, or drags its monstrous coils along.
Lo! where rise thy noble cities, giant works of men of old,
Towns on beetling crags piled heavenward by the hands of builders bold—
Antique towers round whose foundations still the grand old rivers glide,
And the double sea that girds thee like a fence on either side.

. . . . . .

Such the land which sent to battle Marsian footmen stout and good,
Sabine youth, and Volscian spearmen, and Liguria's hardy brood;
Hence have sprung our Decii, Marii, mighty names which all men bless,
Great Camillus, kinsmen Scipios, sternest men in battle's press!
Hence hast thou too sprung, great Cæsar, whom the farthest East doth fear,
So that Mede nor swarthy Indian to our Roman lines come near!
Hail, thou fair and fruitful mother, land of ancient Saturn, hail!
Rich in crops and rich in heroes! thus I dare to wake the tale

Of thine ancient laud and honour, opening founts that slumbered long,
Rolling through our Roman towns the echoes of old Hesiod's song." *

The Third Georgic treats of the herd and the stud. The poet's knowledge on these points must be strongly suspected of being but second-hand—rather the result of having studied some of the Roman "Books of the Farm," than the experience of a practical stock-breeder. Such a work was Varro's 'On Rural Affairs,' which Virgil evidently followed as an authority. From that source he drew, amongst other precepts, the points of a good cow, which he lays down in this formula :—

"An ugly head, a well-fleshed neck,
Deep dewlaps falling from the chin,
Long in the flank, broad in the foot,
Rough hairy ears, and horns bent in."

Such an animal would hardly win a prize from our modern judges of stock. But Virgil, be it remembered, is giving instructions for selection with an eye to breeding purposes exclusively; and an Italian cow of the present day would not be considered by us a handsome animal. Besides, the object of the Roman breeder was to obtain animals which would be "strong to labour,"—good beasts under the yoke; not such as would lay on the greatest weight of flesh at the least

* This fine passage—much of the beauty of which is necessarily lost in this attempt at a translation—has been often imitated, not least successfully by Thomson, in the eulogy upon his native island with which he begins the fifth book of his poem on "Liberty."

possible cost, for the purposes of the butcher. His points of a good horse are entirely different, and approach more nearly our own ideal—"Fine in the head, short in the barrel, broad on the back, full in the chest." Bay and dapple-grey he chooses for colour; white and chestnut he considers the worst. He had not reached the more catholic philosophy of the modern horse-dealer, that "no good horse was ever yet of a bad colour."

The nature of the subject in this Third Georgic allows the poet to indulge even more frequently in digressions. He gives a picture of pastoral life under the hot suns of Numidia, where the herdsman or shepherd drives his charge from pasture to pasture, carrying with him all he wants, like a Roman soldier in a campaign; and again of his winter life in some vague northern region which he calls by the general name of Scythia, but where they seem to have drunk (in imitation of wine, as the southern poet compassionately phrases it) some kind of beer or cider. But the most remarkable of these passages is that which closes the book, and describes the ravages of some terrible pestilence which, beginning with the flocks and herds, extended at last to the wild beasts and to the birds, and even to the fish. There is no historical account of such a visitation in Italy; and it is very probable that Virgil used his licence as a poet to embellish with imaginary details some ordinary epidemic, in order to present to his readers a companion picture to that of the great plague at Athens, which had been so powerfully described by his favourite model Lucretius.

There is no need to say very much about the Fourth and last of the Georgics, which treats exclusively of bees. These little creatures were evidently of more importance in the rural economy of the Romans than they commonly are in ours. Before the discovery of the sugar-cane, the sweetening properties of honey would be much more valuable than they are now; and the inhabitants of a warm climate like Italy make more use of saccharine matter, as an article of ordinary food, than we do. But the habits and natural history of the insect commonwealth to which Virgil devotes this book are so curious and so little understood, that they would only find an appropriate place in a special treatise. There appears to have been no want of interest or research upon the subject among the ancients, for the Greek philosopher Aristomachus is said to have devoted fifty-eight years to this single branch of zoology. Virgil certainly would not help us much in a scientific point of view. The bees were mysteries to him, even more than to us; and, marvellous as they are, he made them more marvellous still. He was quite aware that they had some peculiarities in the matter of sex; but he makes the queen bee, who is really the mother of the swarm, a king, and imagines that they pick up their young ones from the leaves and flowers. He gives also—and with an air of as much practical reality as can be expected from a poet—minute instructions for obtaining a stock of bees at once from the carcass of a steer, beaten and crushed into a mass, and excluded from air: evidently a misapplication of what is said to be a

fact in natural history, that bees will take up their quarters occasionally in the dead body of an animal. The honey he considers to be some kind of dew that falls from heaven. One rule which he gives for preventing the young swarms from rising at undue times has staggered some inexperienced commentators. He advises the owner to pick out the queen bees, and clip their wings. Such a recipe certainly suggests at first sight the old preliminary caution—"First *catch* your bee:" but an experienced bee-keeper will find no difficulty in performing such an operation, if needful.*

The fine episode with which this book concludes, in which the poet relates the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, is more attractive than all his discourse upon bee-keeping.

The Georgics have generally been considered as the poet's most complete work, and it is here, undoubtedly, that he shows us most of himself,—of his habits, his tastes, and his religious opinions. They are poetical essays on the dignity of labour. Warlike glory was the popular theme of the day; but Virgil detests war, and he seeks to enthrone labour in its place. He looks upon tillage as, in some sort, a war in itself, but of a nobler kind—"a holy war of men against the earth," as a French writer expresses it.† He compares its details, in more than one passage, with those

* When we find, in a modern manual, even directions "How to tame vicious bees," it is hard to say what a master of bee-craft can *not* do.—See Mr Pettigrew's clever and amusing 'Handy Book.'

† Jules Lægris.

of the camp and of the battle-field. But besides this, the Georgics contain what seems to be a protest against the fashionable atheism of his age. He sets the worship of the gods in the first place of all.

"First, pay all reverence to the Powers of heaven"—

is his instruction to his pupils—"From Jove all things begin." His motto might have been that which the Benedictines in their purer days adopted—"Ora et labora"—"Pray and work." It has been commonly said that Virgil was in his creed an Epicurean; that he looked upon the gods as beings who, in our English poet's words,

"Lie beside their nectar, careless of mankind."

But a study of his writings will go far to show that such is not the case; that whatever the distinct articles of his creed may have been, he had a deep individual sense of the personal existence of great powers which ruled the affairs of men; that Nature was not to him, as to Lucretius, a mere shrine of hidden mysteries, unlocked to the Epicurean alone, but that he had an eye and a heart for all its riches and beauties, as the "skirts" of a divine glory. In all his verse this feeling shows itself, but nowhere more plainly than in the Georgics.

It is said that this particular work was undertaken by the desire of Mæcenas, with the hope of turning the minds of the veteran soldiers, to whom grants of land had been made in return for their services, to a more peaceful ambition in the quiet cultivation of their

farms. Whether it had that result may well be doubted: the discharged soldier, however heartily he might take to farming, would scarcely go to a poet as his instructor. The practical influence of these treatises in any way is equally doubtful. "It would be absurd to suppose," says Dean Merivale, "that Virgil's verses induced any Roman to put his hand to the plough, or take from his bailiff the management of his own estates; but they served undoubtedly to revive some of the simple tastes and sentiments of the olden time, and perpetuated, amid the vices and corruptions of the Empire, a pure stream of sober and innocent enjoyment." *

* 'Fall of Rome,' iv. 576.

THE ÆNEID.

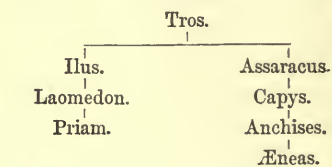
CHAPTER I.

THE SHIPWRECK ON THE COAST OF CARTHAGE.

The Æneid, like the Iliad and Odyssey, is a Tale of Troy. The fascination of that remarkable cycle of legend had not weakened after the lapse of ten centuries. Virgil not only set himself deliberately to imitate Homer in his method of poetical treatment, but he goes to him for his subject. He even makes his own poem, in some sort, a sequel to the Iliad—at least as much so as the Odyssey is. As the subject of this latter poem is the wanderings and final establishment in his native country of the Greek hero Ulysses after victory, so Virgil gives us the story of the escape of a Trojan hero from the ruin of his city, and the perils by land and sea which he encountered, until his final settlement in the distant west, in the land which the gods had promised him. Æneas, like Ulysses, is described as a man of many woes and sufferings; and like him, though he has the justice and the deliberate counsels of heaven all on his side, the enmity of one angry deity is permitted

to vex and thwart him for many long years. This Æneas—reputed son of the goddess Venus by a mortal husband, Anchises—had played no unimportant part in the defence of Troy. Had we not been told that King Priam had no less than fifty sons, it might have been said that he stood very near the throne. For he was the representative of the younger branch of the house of Dardanus—the family of Assaracus—as Priam was of the elder branch, that of Ilus.* A sort of half-mysterious glory is cast round him in the Iliad. He is there addressed as "counsellor of the Trojans;" they honoured him, we are told, "equally with the godlike Hector;" and Neptune is made to utter a prophecy that Jupiter has rejected the house of Priam, but that "Æneas, and his sons, and his sons' sons" should hereafter reign over the Trojans." † Some Homeric critics have even fancied that they detected, in some passages of Homer's poem, a jealousy between Æneas and the sons of Priam. But this surely arises from reading Homer by the light of Virgil, and thus anticipating the future turn of events, when, after the death of Hector and the fall of Priam's kingdom, the prince of the house of Assaracus should rebuild the Trojan fortunes on the far-off shores of Italy.

* The following pedigree is mythical—as pedigrees often are:



† Iliad, xx. 306.

Like Homer, Virgil dashes at once into the heart of his story. This is how he introduces his hero :—

> "Arms and the man I sing, who first,
> By fate of Ilian realm amerced,
> To fair Italia onward bore,
> And landed on Lavinium's shore." *

He tells us nothing, however, for the present, of the escape from Troy and the embarkation of the fugitives, or of the guiding oracles in obedience to which they had sailed forth in quest of this new home. He only shows us Æneas on the sea, having just set sail from Sicily, where the angry Queen of Heaven catches sight of him. Juno, we must remember — Virgil, apparently, has no idea that any one could need reminding of it—Juno has never forgotten or forgiven that scene upon Mount Ida, where the Trojan Paris preferred the fascinations—or the bribes—of Venus to her own stately charms. She had persuaded her royal consort, the king of gods and men, to consent to the downfall of the accursed race ; and she persecutes this unhappy remnant, now on its voyage, with unrelenting hate. Even the poet, who makes use of her persecution as one of the mainsprings of his story, professes his astonishment at its bitterness,—

> "Can such deep hate find place in breasts divine ?" †

* The extracts are in all cases (where not otherwise marked) from Mr Conington's translation, and are made with the permission of his representatives and publishers.

† Milton has translated the line almost literally :—

> "In heavenly spirits could such perversion dwell ?"
> —Par. Lost, vi.

She had another reason, too, for her present jealous feelings. The city of Carthage, where she was especially honoured, she had hoped to make the mistress of the world. And now—so the inexorable Fates have woven it in their web—this new brood from Troy are to destroy it in the years to come. Rome, and not Carthage, the Roman poet would thus convey to his readers, is to have this universal empire.

But they have not reached Latium yet, these hateful Trojans. They never shall. The Queen of Heaven betakes herself to the King of the Winds, where he sits enthroned in his Homeric island of Æolia, controlling his boisterous subjects :—

> "They with the rock's reverberant roar
> Chafe blustering round their prison door :
> He, throned on high, the sceptre sways,
> Controls their moods, their wrath allays.
> Break but that sceptre, sea and land
> And heaven's ethereal deep
> Before them they would whirl like sand,
> And through the void air sweep."

At Juno's request Æolus lets loose his prisoners. Out rush the winds in mad delight.

> "All in a moment, sun and skies
> Are blotted from the Trojans' eyes :
> Black night is brooding o'er the deep,
> Sharp thunder peals, live lightnings leap :
> The stoutest warrior holds his breath,
> And looks as on the face of death.
> At once Æneas thrilled with dread ;
> Forth from his breast, with hands outspread,
> These groaning words he drew :

'O happy thrice, and yet again,
Who died at Troy like valiant men,
E'en in their parents' view!
O Diomed, first of Greeks in fray,
Why passed I not the plain that day,
Yielding my life to you,
Where, stretched beneath a Phrygian sky,
Fierce Hector, tall Sarpedon, lie:
Where Simois tumbles 'neath his wave
Shields, helms, and bodies of the brave?'"

The fleet is scattered in all directions: some ships are cast on the rocks; one goes down with all its crew before their leader's eyes. But Neptune, the sea-god, comes to the rescue. Friendly to the Trojans, as Juno is hostile to them, he resents the interference of the King of the Winds in his dominions—he knows by whose instance he has dared this outrage. He summons the offending winds, and chides them with stern authority:—

"Back to your master instant flee,
And tell him, not to him but me
The imperial trident of the sea
Fell by the lot's award;
His is that prison-house of stone,
A prison, Eurus, all your own;
There let him lord it to his mind,
The jailer-monarch of the wind,
But keep its portal barred."

So the tempest is stilled, and Æneas, with seven ships, the survivors of his fleet of twenty, runs into a land-locked harbour on the coast of Carthage. The crews light a fire, and grind and parch their corn, while Æneas goes farther inland to reconnoitre, and kills deer to mend their meal. Wine they have good

store of—the parting gift from King Acestes, late their host in Sicily. The chief, though in sad anxiety as to the fate of his absent comrades, speaks to the rest in words of good cheer:—

> "You that have seen grim Scylla rave,
> And heard her monsters yell,—
> You that have looked upon the cave
> Where savage Cyclops dwell,—
> Come, cheer your souls, your fears forget;
> This suffering may yield us yet
> A pleasant tale to tell."

Æneas has his advocate, too, in the celestial council. His goddess-mother Venus pleads with her father Jupiter to have pity on her offspring. And Jupiter—very open to influence of this kind now, as in Homer's story—reveals for her comfort the secrets of fate. Æneas shall reach Latium safely, and reign there three years. His son Iulus—or Ascanius, as he is otherwise called—shall succeed him, and transfer the seat of power from Lavinium to his own new-founded city, Alba Longa. Three hundred years his race shall rule there, till in due course the twin-brothers Romulus and Remus shall be born to the war-god Mars, and the elder brother shall lay the foundations of Rome. To the glories of this new capital the Father of the gods will assign neither limit nor end. The wrongs of Troy shall be redressed. The sons of the East, in their new home, shall avenge themselves on their enemies.

> "So stands my will. There comes a day,
> While Rome's great ages hold their way,
> When old Assaracus's sons
> Shall quit them on the Myrmidons,

O'er Phthia and Mycenæ reign,
And humble Argos to their chain.
From Troy's fair stock shall Cæsar rise,
The limits of whose victories
Are ocean, of his fame the skies;
Great Julius, proud that style to bear,
In name and blood Iulus' heir."

Thus, before he has concluded the first book of his great poem, the poet has taken us into his counsels as to the purport of the song. It is not a mere epic romance, in which we are to be charmed with heroic deeds and exciting adventures; it is, like some of our modern novels, a romance with a purpose; and the purpose is the claiming for the great house of Julius the rightful empire of Rome, and the celebration of the glories of that house in the person of Augustus. And as the Iliad of Homer, beyond the mere vocation of the poet to arouse and charm a warlike audience by the recital of deeds of arms, had its own purpose also —the glorification of the Greek nation—so the Roman poet may be said to have written a counter-Iliad, to extol the later fortunes of the royal house of Troy in the descendants, as he is pleased to imagine them, of Iulus. For any historic foundation of such a genealogy we may look in vain. King Brute stands upon much the same historical level, as the ancestor of the Britons, as can be claimed for Iulus of Troy as the founder of the Julian house and of Rome. But, for the present, we must be content to assume his existence, and to follow the course of the narrative as the poet wills. The claim of Trojan descent is not an invention of Virgil's, though he

may have been the first to work it out so much in detail. It was a claim in which his countrymen always delighted, and there were not wanting traditions in its support. Another purpose, also, Virgil seems to have at heart. He does not care so much, after all, for the subjugation of Greece and the extension of the imperial rule of Rome. The empire of Augustus is to be peace. There has been enough, and more than enough, of war. In the prognostications of the future of his nation, even here we are reminded of the strains of the "Pollio." To the soul of the Roman poet—unlike his master Homer in this—war, and more especially civil war, is absolutely hateful. He can describe it, when needed for his purpose, and describe it well; but it is as the scourge of nations, or at best the terrible remedy for greater evils;—not, as the Greek poet calls it, "the strife which is the joy of men."

Venus loses no time in furthering, so far as she may, the counsels of Jupiter. She puts into the heart of the Queen of Carthage, on whose shores Æneas and his crews have now been cast, feelings of pity and compassion towards the shipwrecked strangers. She comes in person, also, to comfort her son Æneas in his trouble. Attended by his faithful friend Achates, he is exploring, like a careful leader, the strange coast on which he finds himself—

> "When in the bosom of the wood
> Before him, lo, his mother stood,
> In mien and gear a Spartan maid,
> Or like Harpalycè arrayed,
> Who tires fleet coursers in the chase,
> And heads the swiftest streams of Thrace.

Slung from her shoulders hangs a bow;
Loose to the wind her tresses flow;
Bare was her knee; her mantle's fold
The gathering of a knot controlled.
And 'Saw ye, youths,' she asks them, 'say,
One of my sisters here astray;
A silver quiver at her side,
And for a scarf a lynx's hide;
Or pressing on the wild boar's track
With upraised dart and voiceful pack?'"

There is in this description a happy reminiscence of an earlier legend. In such guise—not with any of the meretricious attractions assigned to the goddess of Cyprus and of Paphos, but as a simple mountain nymph—had she won her mortal lover, the Trojan shepherd Anchises, from whom this her dear son was born. So ran the fable; and it was added that she had enjoined her lover never to disclose the secret of the child's birth, nor to boast of the favour shown him by a goddess, but to bring the boy up in the forests of Ida, as the offspring of a wood-nymph. Anchises, in his pride, had neglected or forgotten her warning, and was punished by premature weakness and a helpless old age.

Professing herself to be but a Tyrian damsel, Venus replies to her son's questions as to the inhabitants of the land. They are a colony from Tyre; their queen, Dido, has fled from the treachery of her false brother Pygmalion, who, after murdering her husband Sichæus, had possessed himself of the kingdom. Hither she has escaped with her husband's wealth, and is founding a new city on the coast of Africa. Æneas tells

her in return his own sad story, and is comforted by the assurance that all his fleet, though scattered, are safe—all but one unhappy vessel and her crew. Then, as she turns to leave him, the disguised divinity becomes apparent.

> "Ambrosial tresses round her head
> A more than earthly fragrance shed;
> Her falling robe her footsteps swept,
> And showed the goddess as she stept."

Æneas and his companion mount the crest of the hill, whence they look down upon the half-finished walls of Carthage, and the swarming bands of workmen. They are digging out the harbour, planning that most essential structure in a city of any pretension, an amphitheatre for public spectacles, and building a magnificent temple to Juno. Girt with a mist of invisibility which Venus has thrown round them,—like Ulysses in the court of Phæacia—the strangers enter the brazen gates of the temple. All is magnificent and wonderful. But, marvel of marvels! both walls and doors are sculptured with a history which Æneas knows only too well. Even here is recorded, on this distant and unknown shore, the story of stories—the Tale of Troy. With eager and tearful eyes the Trojan chief peruses the several groups, and identifies the various incidents. Here the Greeks fly to their ships, hard pressed by Hector and the Trojans: there, again, the terrible Achilles drives the Trojans in slaughter before him. The death of young Troilus, hurled from his chariot, is there; and, to match the picture, Hector dragged at Achilles's chariot-wheels round

the city walls. Memnon the Ethiopian and the amazon Penthesilea also find a place; and there, amidst the foremost combatants, Æneas can recognise himself.

While the Trojan chief and his companion Achates are reading this sculptured history, the queen herself approaches. And while they admire her majesty and grace, conspicuous amongst all her train, lo! the missing comrades of Æneas make their appearance before her as suppliants. They tell the story of their shipwreck on the coast: and they think Æneas is lost, as he had thought they were. Then the mist in which Venus had wrapped the hero and his comrade dissolves, and the two parties recognise and welcome each other. Dido, like all the world, has heard of the name of Æneas, and the sufferings of the heroes of Troy. She can pity such sufferings from her own bitter experience:

> "Myself not ignorant of woe,
> Compassion I have learnt to show."

The sentiment has been adopted by modern writers in all languages. "She had suffered persecution and learnt mercy," says Sterne in a like case: and even in Sterne's mouth, the sentiment is natural and true.

The strangers are hospitably welcomed, and offered every facility for refitting their fleet, and preparing for the continuance of their voyage. Æneas sends down to his ships for presents worthy of so kind a hostess: and, with a father's pride, he sends also for his young son to introduce him to the queen. The evening is devoted to feasting and revelry. The royal bard—that indispensable figure in all courts, Trojan or Tyrian or Greek—sings to the assembled guests. It is to be remarked that his lay is not, as we might expect, of

heroes and their deeds: it is the song of Silenus, in the Pastorals, over again—the favourite subject of the poet, the wonders of nature and creation.

> "He sings the wanderings of the moon,
> The sun eclipsed in deadly swoon;
> Whence humankind and cattle came,
> And whence the rain-spout and the flame,
> Arcturus and the two bright bears,
> And Hyads weeping showery tears;
> Why winter suns so swiftly go,
> And why the winter nights move slow."

All the while, during the song and the banquet, the queen is fondling the fair boy, who sits next to her. Unhappy Dido! it is Cupid, the god of love, who, at his false mother's bidding, has assumed the shape of Æneas's young son. The true Ascanius lies fast bound in an enchanted sleep, by Venus's machinations, in her bower in the far island of Cythera; and the Tyrian queen is nursing unawares in her bosom the passion which is to be her ruin. Æneas has already become an object of tender interest to her. She hangs upon his lips, like Desdemona on Othello's:—

> "Much of great Priam asks the dame,
> Much of his greater son;
> Now in what armour Memnon came,
> Now how Achilles shone."

Above all, she begs of him to tell his own story—his escape and his seven years' wanderings. And Æneas begins; and, with an exact imitation of Homer's management of his story, like Ulysses in the court of Alcinous, retraces his adventures from the last fatal night of Troy.

CHAPTER II.

ÆNEAS RELATES THE FALL OF TROY.

It has been said that this poem is a kind of supplement to the Iliad. Æneas tells us what was not there told by Homer, but what is presupposed in his Odyssey,—the later history of the siege and capture of Troy. He relates at length the stratagem of the Wooden Horse, by which the Greeks at last outwitted their enemies. The fleet, which had seemed to sail for home, had withdrawn, and lay concealed in the harbour of Tenedos. The wooden fabric—dedicated to Minerva, as the tale went—was left standing outside the city. It was suggested to bring it within the walls, when the priest Laocoon rushed to prevent it—suspecting some such stratagem as in truth had been contrived. He even hurled his spear against its side, and might have thus made a beginning of its destruction, when behold, a prisoner was brought in. It was the treacherous Sinon; a Greek who had undertaken to play the dangerous part of a double spy. The tale he told his captors was this: that he, though a Greek, was a fugitive from Greek vengeance—especially from the

hated Ulysses. He had been fixed upon as a victim to propitiate the offended gods; for there had come an oracle from Apollo, that as the blood of a virgin had to be shed to propitiate the gales on the expedition to Troy, so blood—that of a Greek—must purchase their return. Ulysses had contrived that Sinon should be the victim, and it was to escape this doom that he had thus fled.

The Trojans were moved to pity—they spared the traitor's life; only, in return, King Priam adjured him to tell them the true intent of the Horse. Sinon declared that the Greeks had meant to set it up themselves, an offering to Minerva, within the Trojan citadel when they should have captured it; it behoved the Trojans now to seize it and drag it within the walls: for, if this were done, then—so ran the oracles—Asia should avenge itself upon Europe, and the Greeks in their turn should be besieged in their homes.*

The traitor's tale was all too easily believed. There came, too, a fearful omen, which hurried the Trojans to adopt this false counsel. The priest Laocoon, who had dared to strike the wooden monster, was seized, while offering sacrifice to Neptune, with his two sons, by two huge sea-serpents (so old is the belief, false or true, in these apocryphal monsters), which came sailing in to the beach from the direction of Tenedos. In the description which the poet gives of their move-

* Dante in his Inferno punishes Sinon with an eternal sweating-sickness: a singular penalty, which is shared only by Potiphar's wife.—Inf. xxx.

ments at sea, we seem to be reading a versified extract from the log of some modern sea-captain :—

> "Amid the waves they rear their breasts,
> And toss on high their sanguined crests ;*
> The hind-part coils along the deep,
> And undulates with sinuous sweep."

The two unhappy youths are first caught and strangled —then the father. The legend is well known to others besides students of the Æneid, from the marble group of the Laocoon ; which, however, does not tell the story in the same way, or in so probable a shape, as the poet does, since it represents the reptiles as embracing all three victims at once in their folds. Then, with glad shouts and songs of youths and maidens, the huge monster was dragged over a breach made purposely in the walls of Troy. Yet not without a voice of warning, disregarded, from Cassandra, daughter of King Priam, who had the gift of prophecy, and whose fate it was, like so many prophets in their own families, to prophesy in vain—nor without difficulties which might in themselves have well been considered presages of evil :—

> "Four times 'twas on the threshold stayed ;
> Four times the armour clashed and brayed ;
> Yet press we on, with passion blind,
> All forethought blotted from our mind,
> Till the dread monster we install
> Within the temple's tower-built wall."

* Nay, the "crests" spoken of seem to have been (as reported of the modern sea-serpent) of actual hair ; since Pindar, as Conington has noted, calls them "manes."

Inside, the fabric is full of armed Greeks. How many there were in number has been disputed—though possibly, in a legend of this kind, the question of more or fewer is scarcely relevant. It is a question, however, which derives some interest from the fact that it was one of the difficulties which exercised the mind of the first Napoleon during his exile. Studying the siege of Troy as if it were a mere prosaic operation in modern warfare, he was struck by the improbability of the whole stratagem. How "even a single company of the Guard" could be hid in such a machine, and dragged from some distance inside the city walls, the French Emperor was unable to conceive, and regarded the story as an infringement of even a poet's licence. Napoleon was not much of a Latin scholar, and, so far as the main point of his criticism went, had depended too implicitly upon French translators. Segrais, discussing the question in a note, thought there might be perhaps some two or three hundred. Indeed most of our English translators have gone out of their way to exaggerate the number. But Virgil himself, as has been pertinently remarked by Dr Henry, only makes nine men actually come out of the horse, all of whom he mentions by name. The poet certainly does not say in so many words that these were all, but he, at least, is not answerable for a larger number. Among the nine are the young Neoptolemus, surnamed Pyrrhus—"Red-haired,"—son of the dead Achilles, and now his successor in the recognised championship of the force; Sthenelus, the friend and comrade of Diomed (for whose absence it seems hard

to account); Machaon, the hero-physician, whom one hardly expects to find selected for such a desperate service; Epeus, the contriver of the machine; and Ulysses, without whose aid and presence no such stratagem would seem complete.

At dead of night the traitor Sinon looked out to sea, and saw a light in the offing. It was the fire-signal from Agamemnon's vessel; the Greek fleet had come back under cover of the darkness from its lurking-place at Tenedos. Then he silently undid the fastenings of the horse, and the Greek adventurers, as has been said, emerged from their wooden prison.

In the visions of the night Æneas saw the ghastly spectre of the dead Hector stand before him,—

> "All torn by dragging at the car,
> And black with gory dust of war.
> . . . . . .
> Ah, what a sight was there to view!
> How altered from the man we knew,
> Our Hector, who from day's long toil
> Comes radiant in Achilles' spoil,
> Or with that red right hand, which casts
> The fires of Troy on Grecian masts!
> Blood-clotted hung his beard and hair,
> And all those many wounds were there,
> Which on his gracious person fell
> Around the walls he loved so well."

Virgil seems to have followed the more horrible tradition, which appears also in some of the Greek dramatists, that Achilles fastened Hector to his chariot while still alive.

The shade of the dead hero had come to warn

Æneas not to throw away his life in a hopeless resistance. Troy must fall: but to Æneas, as the hope of his race, the prince of the house of Priam formally intrusts the national gods of Troy and the sacred fire of Vesta, to be carried into the new land which he shall colonise. It is a formal transfer of the kingdom and the priesthood to the younger branch — the line of Assaracus.

Æneas awoke, as he goes on to tell, to hear the war-cries of the Greeks and the clash of arms within the city. Already the storming-party had attacked and set fire to the house of Deiphobus,—to whom Helen, willing or unwilling, had been made over on the death of Paris; and therefore naturally the first point which Menelaus made for. Æneas himself is summoned by a comrade, Panthus, to come to the rescue. The first despairing words of Panthus have a pathos which has made them well known. No English idiom will express with equal brevity and point the Latin "*Fuimus*,"—"We have been—and are not," for this is understood.* "*Fuimus Troes*"—Mr Conington's translation gives the full sense, but at the expense of its terseness:—

> "We have been Trojans—Troy has been—
> She sat, but sits no more, a queen."

It was a phrase peculiarly Roman. So they used the word "Vixi"—"I have lived"—in epitaphs, to express death; though in this, as in so many cases, the

* The French word "*feu*," used of a person deceased, is probably from this Latin use of "*fui*."

turn of the expression is due to that euphemism which refrained from using any words of direct ill omen.

"The father of the gods," says Panthus, "has transferred all our glory to Argos." There was a story (alluded to in one of the lost tragedies of Sophocles, of which we have but a fragment) that on the night of the capture of Troy the tutelary deities departed in a body, taking their images with them. It is a singular parallel to the well-known tradition, that before the fall of Jerusalem supernatural voices were heard in the night exclaiming, "Let us depart hence!" The Romans had a regular formula for the evocation of the gods from an enemy's city, and inviting them, with promises of all due honours and sacrifices, to transfer their seat to Rome; and to attack any city without these solemn preliminaries was held to bring a curse on the besiegers.*

Æneas is anxious to assure his fair listener that, in spite of Hector's adjuration to fly, he did all that man might do in defence of his king and his countrymen. He had rallied a band of brave men, and for a while made head against the enemy. They were favoured by the mistake made by a party of Greeks, who took them for friends in the darkness, and whom they cut to pieces, and having arrayed themselves in their armour, dealt destruction in the enemy's very ranks. But all resistance was in vain. The appearance of Neoptolemus—Pyrrhus—the "Red-haired"—and the comparison of the young warrior in his strength and beauty to

* For this reason, says Macrobius, the real name of Rome and of its guardian deity was always kept a secret.

the serpent who comes forth after casting its winter slough, is fine in the original, and finely translated:—

"Full in the gate see Pyrrhus blaze,
A meteor, shooting steely rays:
So flames a serpent into light,
On poisonous herbage fed,
Which late in subterranean night
Through winter lay as dead:
Now from its ancient wounds undressed,
Invigorate and young,
Sunward it rears its glittering breast,
And darts its three-forked tongue."

And the fate of the unhappy Priam is an equally beautiful picture, of a different tone:—

"Perhaps you ask of Priam's fate:
He, when he sees his town o'erthrown,
Greeks bursting through his palace-gate,
And thronging chambers once his own,
His ancient armour, long laid by,
Around his palsied shoulders throws,
Girds with a useless sword his thigh,
And totters forth to meet his foes."

Hecuba, who with her women is clinging to the altar, rebukes her husband for this mad attempt to match his feeble strength against the enemy. Still, when Pyrrhus rushes into the hall in pursuit of one of Priam's sons, Polites, and slays him full in the father's sight, the old man hurls a javelin at the Greek chief, with a taunting curse upon his cruelty. But it is

"A feeble dart, no blood that drew;
The ringing metal turned it back,
And left it clinging, weak and slack."

And the ruthless son of Achilles drags the old king to the altar, and slays him there.

One more episode of that terrible night Æneas relates to his hostess :—

> "I stood alone, when lo ! I mark,
> In Vesta's temple crouching dark,
> The traitress Helen: the broad blaze
> Gives me full light, as round I gaze.
> She, shrinking from the Trojans' hate,
> Made frantic by their city's fate,
> Nor dreading less the Danaan sword,
> The vengeance of her injured lord,—
> She, Troy's and Argos' common fiend,
> Sat cowering, by the altar screened.
> My blood was fired : fierce passion woke
> To quit Troy's fall by one sure stroke."

But his goddess-mother, Venus, stays his hand, and bids him think rather of saving his wife, and aged father, and infant son. Virgil gives us no hint of the other story of Helen's discovery by her angry husband Menelaus, who was lifting his sword to kill the adulteress, when his arm fell powerless before the fascination of her beauty.

Obedient to the goddess, says Æneas, he went to seek his father Anchises, that he might carry him with him in his flight. But the old man refused to move. He would die, he said, in Troy. Life might be dear to the young ; but for himself, even the tender mercies of the enemy would give him all he seeks, though they leave his corpse unburied,—

> "He lacks not much that lacks a grave."

The desperate entreaties of his son were all in vain, until there came an omen from heaven. While Æneas was threatening — since the old man would not be saved—to rush himself again into the fight and meet a warrior's death, his wife Creusa placed their young son Iulus in his arms. Lo! on the child's head there played a lambent light of flame. The mother and Æneas would have sought to extinguish it, but Anchises recognised in it a sign from heaven. Virgil reads us no special interpretation, but surely he meant his Roman readers to understand that the seal of sovereignty was thus early set upon the founder of the great house of Julius. Thunder on the left hand—always the best of auguries—and a meteor flashing across the sky and pointing out their path to the fugitives, confirm the omen.

So the old man was lifted on his son's shoulders, Iulus walking by his side, and Creusa following at some distance. They were to meet outside the city, at the temple of Ceres. Anchises bore in his hands the little images of the household gods (like Laban's teraphim) and the sacred fire; for Æneas himself, red-handed from the battle, might not touch them. But soon the steps of their enemies were heard in pursuit; and Æneas, making his way with his precious burden through by paths to the place of rendezvous, reached it only to find that though many other fugitives, men, women, and children, had assembled there, the unhappy Creusa had not followed him. Cursing men and gods alike in his agony, he retraced his steps towards Troy, and even penetrated unharmed into the

wreck of Priam's palace, crying aloud his wife's name. Suddenly her shade appeared to him, and bade him not continue so vain a search, or grieve for a loss which was but the fulfilment of the counsels of heaven. She is content to know the future glories which are in store for her husband, and thankful that her own fate has been death (we are left to suppose, at the hands of the Greeks) rather than captivity and slavery. Æneas listened, and at once, obedient to the recognised voice of the gods, whether for good or evil, as is his character throughout, yielded to his fate, and hid himself with his little band of fugitives in the forests of Mount Ida. There they had spent the winter months in building themselves a little fleet of galleys out of the abundant pine-wood; and with the early summer launched upon the seas, wholly in ignorance of their destination, but awaiting confidently the guidance of heaven towards their promised resting-place.

CHAPTER III.

ÆNEAS CONTINUES HIS NARRATIVE.

So, with his father and his infant son, and carrying with him the national gods and sacred fire of Troy, Æneas and the remnant of the Trojans had set forth upon their voyage for the unknown shores of Hesperia—the "Land of the West." Their first resting-place was on the friendly coast of Thrace, where Æneas laid the foundations of a city which was to bear his name. A strange adventure befell him there. While he was pulling some cornel-twigs which grew out of a mound, he found, to his horror, that the ends dropped blood. A third time, after prayer to avert the omen, he plucked a sapling, when a hollow voice from below warned him to desist from such cruelty. It is the grave of the unhappy Polydorus, a young son of Priam, whom his father, when Troy became hard pressed, had sent away with some of his treasures to the safe keeping of the king of Thrace, who for the sake of these treasures had basely murdered him. The cornel-wood spears with which he had been transfixed had taken root, and the blood had flowed

from his body.* They did but wait to pay due honours to the shade of Polydorus, and then hastened from the accursed coast. Landing next on the sacred isle of Delos, they consulted the oracle there as to their future home. Apollo was as enigmatical as his wont—he bade them "seek out their ancient mother." They understood this to be spoken of the ancient cradle of their race; Anchises thought the phrase pointed to Crete, the birthplace of their ancestral hero Teucrus, and where stood the ancient Mount Ida, from which the mountain in the Troad derived its name. And Idomeneus, the king of Crete, who had joined the war against Troy, had been driven from his kingdom, and left a vacant throne.† To Crete they sailed, and there began to build a city, to be called Pergamia, after the citadel of Troy. But a year of deadly pestilence fell on man and beast; and in a dream Æneas saw the angry gods of Troy standing by him "in the full moonlight that streamed through the windows," and warning him that the promised land, the ancient home of their race, is not in Crete, but Hesperia—the "Land of the West"—whence came their forefather Dardanus. Then Anchises too re-

* Horrible as the legend is, Spenser thought it worth adopting. The Red-Cross Knight, to make a garland for Fidessa, tears branches from the tree that had once been Fradubio.—'Faery Queen,' I. ii. 30.

† The story of Idomeneus, according to the old annotators upon Virgil, has a curious similarity to that of Jephthah. He had vowed that if he escaped from a storm at sea, he would offer in sacrifice the first thing that met him on landing. It was his son. A plague followed, and his subjects expelled him.

membered that such had been the frequent warning of Cassandra—the prophetess to whom none would listen. They re-embarked accordingly. After a storm of three days and three nights, when no pilot could keep the course, they were cast upon the islands of the Harpies * —the monster sisters, half women and half birds, foul and loathsome, who are hateful to gods and men. With them they had to do battle for the meal which they had spread; and one of those hags, in her wrath, prophesied that before they reached their promised Hesperia they should be forced "to eat their tables."

The description of the ensuing voyage, in Mr Conington's tasteful translation, reads like a passage from the 'Lord of the Isles,' yet presents a fair equivalent, especially in the last fine touch, to the Latin original:—

"The south wind freshens in the sail;
We hurry o'er the tide,
Where'er the helmsman and the gale
Conspire our course to guide;
Now rises o'er the foamy flood
Zacynthos, with its crown of wood,

* There is a fine description of these hags in Morris's 'Jason,' where the voyagers

"Beheld the daughters of the Earth and Sea,
The dreadful Snatchers, who like women were
Down to the breast, with scanty close black hair
About their heads, and dim eyes ringed with red,
And bestial mouths set round with lips of lead.
But from their gnarled necks there 'gan to spring
Half hair, half feathers, and a sweeping wing
Grew out instead of arm on either side,
And thick plumes underneath the breast did hide
The place where joined the fearful natures twain.

Dulichium, Samè, Neritos,
Whose rocky sides the waves emboss;
The crags of Ithaca we flee,
Laertes' rugged sovereignty;
Nor in our flight forget to curse
The land that was Ulysses' nurse."

They landed on the coast of Leucadia, at Actium—the scene, be it remembered, of Augustus's great naval victory over Antony and Cleopatra. Here, the Trojan chief takes care to say, he refreshed his weary crew with rest, and celebrated national games. Nay, he hung up there, fugitive as he was, a trophy of defiance—a shield which he had taken from a Greek hero, and inscribed upon it, "The spoil of Æneas from the conquering Argives." So speaks the poet; his Roman audience would recognise the Actian games, celebrated there every fifth year by order of Augustus in honour of his great victory; and Æneas's trophy is not so out of place as it might seem.

At Buthrotus, in Epirus, the wanderers had met with old friends. Andromache is settled there, now the wife of Helenus, who, by a strange vicissitude, has become the successor of Neoptolemus in his Greek province. There is little of what we call sentiment in these "heroic" times, especially as concerns "woman and her master." It grates upon the feelings of the reader who has in mind the pathetic scene between Hector and his wife in the Iliad of Homer, to be told here by the poet—told, too, as an ordinary incident, as in fact it was—that Andromache had become the property of the conqueror Neoptolemus, and that he,

bent upon a marriage with Hermione, daughter of Helen and Menelaus, had handed over his Trojan wife —"Hector's Andromache," as she still pathetically calls herself—to her fellow-captive Helenus, Hector's brother. She tells her own sad story, not without some sense of its wretchedness—

> "Ay—I am living; living still
> Through all extremity of ill."

And she envies the fate of Polyxena, her sister-in-law, slain on the tomb of Achilles. Still, she has accepted her lot—the lot of so many women in her day. And Helenus, her present lord, is (if that be any consolation) a sort of king; for Orestes has killed Neoptolemus, and Helenus has in some way succeeded him, and built a new "Pergamus" in Greece. So that here, too, the poet would tell us, Troy has conquered her conquerors—a son of Priam reigns in the territory of Achilles. But the impression made upon an English mind as to Andromache's fate is, after all, that of degradation, and we gladly turn from the page which relates it.

Helenus, like his sister Cassandra, has the gift of prophecy; he had been the great authority on all such matters to his countrymen during the siege. He now read the omens for Æneas, at his request; all were favourable. The wanderers should reach the promised Hesperia; but that western land was further off than they thought, and their voyage would prove long and weary. When they reached it, they should find under

a holm-oak a white sow with a litter of thirty young ones: there the new town was to be built—the "Alba Longa" which has already been forenamed in Jupiter's promise to Venus. Helenus dismissed them with good wishes and ample presents; Andromache making special gifts to the boy Ascanius, whose age and features remind the mother of her own lost Astyanax. Æneas's words of farewell are these:—

> "Live, and be blest! 'tis sweet to feel
> Fate's book is closed and under seal.
> For us, alas! that volume stern
> Has many another page to turn.
> Yours is a rest assured: no more
> Of ocean wave to task the oar;
> No far Ausonia to pursue,
> Still flying, flying from the view.'

They set sail from this friendly shore, and on the following day caught their first sight of the shores of Italy. But though they landed and offered sacrifice to Juno, as Helenus had bid them do, they knew that this was not the spot on which they were to settle, and soon put to sea again. They passed the bay of Tarentum, escaping the dangers of Charybdis, and landed under Ætna, on the shore where dwell the Cyclops—the one-eyed race of giants, who, according to one legend, labour in their underground forges for Vulcan, the divine smith. Here the poet introduces us to a direct reminiscence of the wanderings of Ulysses. He adopts the whole of Homer's story—the visit of the Greek chief and his comrades to the cave of the giant Polyphemus, his

cannibal meal, and the vengeance which Ulysses took upon him by burning out his eye.* Æneas relates how he met there with one of Ulysses' crew, who by some mischance had been left behind, and who had hid himself three months (so close is the date of the two voyages) from the clutches of Polyphemus and his fellow-Cyclops. They took the wretched fugitive on board, and put to sea again just in time to escape the blind monster, who waded into the sea after them at the sound of the oars. They skirted the coast of Sicily, and at Drepanum the chief had buried his father Anchises. It was on casting off from Sicily that he had been driven by the storm on this unknown coast of Libya, on the spot soon to be famous enough as the site of Carthage.

"So king Æneas told his tale,
While all beside were still—
Rehearsed the fortunes of his sail,
And Fate's mysterious will:
Then to its close his legend brought,
And gladly took the rest he sought."

* See Homer's Odyssey, p. 69.

CHAPTER IV.

DIDO.

The Carthaginian queen has been an eager listener to Æneas's story. She is love-stricken—suddenly, and irremediably. The poet has thought it necessary to explain the fact by the introduction of the god of love himself, whom, in the shape of the young Ascanius, she has been nursing on her bosom. The passion itself is looked upon by the poet—and as we must suppose by his audience—as such a palpable weakness, that even in a woman (and it is to women almost exclusively, in ancient classical fiction, that these sudden affections are attributed) it was thought necessary to account for it by the intervention of some more than human influence. Either human nature has developed, or our modern poets understand its workings better. Shakespeare makes the angry Brabantio accuse the Moor of having stolen his daughter's love

"By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;"

but Othello himself has a far simpler and more natural explanation of the matter—

"She loved me for the dangers I had passed;—
This only is the witchcraft I have used."

So it has been with Dido. But she is terribly ashamed of her own feelings. She finds relief in disclosing them to a very natural confidant—her sister Anna. She confesses her weakness, but avows at the same time a determination not to yield to it. The stranger has interested her deeply, after a fashion which has not touched her since the death of her husband Sichæus.

"Were not my purpose fixed as fate
With none in wedlock's band to mate,—
. . . . . .
Were bed and bridal aught but pain,—
Perchance I had been weak again."

But her sister—suiting her counsels, as all confidants are apt to do, to the secret wishes rather than to the professions of Dido—encourages the passion. Perpetual widowhood has a romantic sound, but is not, in Anna's opinion, a desirable estate. Besides, in this newly-planted colony, surrounded as they are by fierce African tribes, an alliance with these Trojan strangers will be a tower of strength. The stout arm of such a husband as Æneas is much needed by a widowed queen. His visit—so Anna thinks—is nothing less than providential—

"'Twas Heaven and Juno's grace that bore,
I ween, these Trojans to our shore."

By all means let them detain their illustrious visitor with them as long as possible—his ships require re-

fitting and his crews refreshment—and the result will not be doubtful.

The advice suits with the queen's new mood too well to be rejected. Together the sisters offer pious sacrifices to the gods—to Juno especially, as the goddess of marriage—to give their sanction to the hoped-for alliance. The restless feelings of the enamoured woman are described in one of the finest and most admired passages of the poem :—

"E'en as a deer whom from afar
A swain, in desultory war,
Where Cretan woods are thick,
Has pierced, as 'mid the trees she lies,
And, all unknowing of his prize,
Has left the dart to stick :
She wanders lawn and forest o'er,
While the fell shaft still drinks her gore.*
Now through the city of her pride
She walks, Æneas at her side,
Displays the stores of Sidon's trade,
And stately homes already made :
Begins, but stops she knows not why,
And lets the imperfect utterance die.
Now, as the sunlight wears away,
She seeks the feast of yesterday,
Inquires once more of Troy's eclipse,
And hangs once more upon his lips ;
Then, when the guests have gone their ways,
And the dim moon withdraws her rays,

* "To the which place a poor sequestered stag,
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,
Had come to languish."
—SHAKESPEARE, 'As you Like it,' ii. 1.

And setting stars to slumber call,
Alone she mourns in that lone hall,
Clasps the dear couch where late he lay,
Beholds him, hears him far away;
Or keeps Ascanius on her knees,
And in the son the father sees,
Might she but steal one peaceful hour
From love's ungovernable power.
No more the growing towers arise,
No more in martial exercise
The youth engage, make strong the fort,
Or shape the basin to a port."

The powers of Olympus here come again upon the scene. Juno sees, not without a secret satisfaction, the prospect of an entanglement between Æneas and Dido, which may detain these hated Trojans in Africa, and so prevent their settlement and dominion in Italy. So Carthage, and not the Rome of the future, may yet be the mistress of the world. She addresses herself at once to the goddess of love—not without a sneer at the success of her snares in poor Dido's case; a sorry triumph it is indeed—two divinities pitted against a weak woman! But come—suppose in this matter they agree to act in concert; let there be a union between the two nations, and let Carthage be the seat of their joint power; its citizens shall pay equal honours to the queen of heaven and the queen of love. Venus understands perfectly well that Juno's motive is at any cost to prevent the foundation of Rome; but, having a clearer vision (we must presume) than her great rival of the probable results, she agrees to the terms. There is to be a hunting-party on the morrow,

and Juno will take care that opportunity shall be given for the furtherance of Dido's passion. The royal hunt is again a striking picture, almost mediæval in its rich colouring :—

"The morn meantime from ocean rose :
Forth from the gates with daybreak goes
The silvan regiment :
Thin nets are there, and spears of steel,
And there Massylian riders wheel,
And dogs of keenest scent.
Before the chamber of her state
Long time the Punic nobles wait
The appearing of the queen :
With gold and purple housings fit
Stands her proud steed, and champs the bit
His foaming jaws between.
At length with long attendant train
She comes : her scarf of Tyrian grain,*
With broidered border decked :
Of gold her quiver : knots of gold
Confine her hair : her vesture's fold
By golden clasp is checked.
The Trojans and Iulus gay
In glad procession take their way.
Æneas, comeliest of the throng,
Joins their proud ranks, and steps along,
As when from Lycia's wintry airs
To Delos' isle Apollo fares ;
The Agathyrsian, Dryop, Crete,
In dances round his altar meet :
He on the heights of Cynthus moves,
And binds his hair's loose flow

* This was the dye procured from the shell-fish called murex—especially costly, because each fish contained but a single drop of the precious tincture.

With cincture of the leaf he loves:
Behind him sounds his bow;—
So firm Æneas' graceful tread,
So bright the glories round his head.

. . . . . .

But young Ascanius on his steed
With boyish ardour glows,
And now in ecstacy of speed
He passes these, now those:
For him too peaceful and too tame
The pleasure of the hunted game:
He longs to see the foaming boar,
Or hear the tawny lion's roar.

Meantime, loud thunder-peals resound,
And hail and rain the sky confound:
And Tyrian chiefs and sons of Troy,
And Venus' care, the princely boy,
Seek each his shelter, winged with dread,
While torrents from the hills run red.
Driven haply to the same retreat,
The Dardan chief and Dido meet.
Then Earth, the venerable dame,
And Juno, give the sign:
Heaven lightens with attesting flame,
And bids its torches shine,
And from the summit of the peak
The nymphs shrill out the nuptial shriek.

That day she first began to die;
That day first taught her to defy
The public tongue, the public eye.
No secret love is Dido's aim:
She calls it marriage now; such name
She chooses to conceal her shame."

A rejected suitor of the Carthaginian queen,—Iarbas, king of Gætulia,—hears the news amongst the rest. He is a reputed son of Jupiter; and now, furious at seeing this wanderer from Troy—"this second Paris," as he calls him—preferred to himself, he appeals for vengeance to his Olympian parent. The appeal is heard, and Mercury is despatched to remind Æneas of his high destinies, which he is forgetting in this dalliance at Carthage. If he has lost all ambition for himself, let him at least remember the rights of his son Ascanius, which he is thus sacrificing to the indulgence of his own wayward passions. The immortal messenger finds the Trojan chief busied in planning the extension of the walls and streets of the new city which he has already adopted as his home. He delivers his message briefly and emphatically, and vanishes. Thus recalled to a full sense of his false position, Æneas is at first horror-struck and confounded. How to disobey the direct commands of Heaven, and run counter to the oracles of fate; how, on the other hand, to break his faith with Dido, and ungratefully betray the too confiding love of his hostess and benefactress; how even to venture to hint to her a word of parting, and how to escape the probable vengeance of the Carthaginian people;—all these considerations crowd into his mind, and perplex him terribly. On the main point, however, his resolution is soon taken. He will obey the mandate of the gods, at any cost. He summons the most trusted of his comrades, and bids them make secret preparations to set sail once more in quest of their home in Italy. He promises himself that he will

either find or make some oppportunity of breaking the news of his departure to Dido.

This is the turning-point of the poem; and here it is that the interest to a modern reader, so far as the mere plot of the story is concerned, is sadly marred by the way in which the hero thus cuts himself off from all our sympathies. His most ingenious apologists—and he has found many—appeal to us in vain. Upon the audience or the readers of his own time, no doubt, the effect might have been different. To the critics of Augustus's court, love—or what they understood by it—was a mere weakness in the hero. The call which Heaven had conveyed to him was to found the great empire of the future; and because he obeys the call at the expense of his tenderest feelings, the poet gives him always his distinctive epithet — the "pious" Æneas. The word "pious," it must be remembered, implies in the Latin the recognition of all duties to one's country and one's parents, as well as to the gods. And in all these senses Æneas would deserve it. But to an English mind, the "piety" which pleads the will of Heaven as an excuse for treachery to a woman, only adds a deeper hue of infamy to the transaction. It

> "Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse."

But our story must not wait for us to discuss too curiously the morals of the hero. Æneas has thought to make his preparations without the knowledge of the queen—while she

> "Still dreams her happy dream, nor thinks
> That ought can break those golden links."

But, as the poet goes on to say, "Who can cheat the eyes of love?" Dido soon learns his change of purpose, and taxes him openly with his baseness and ingratitude. The whole of this fourth book of the Æneid—"The Passion of Dido," as it has been called—is of a very high order of tragic pathos. The queen is by turns furious and pathetic; now she hurls menaces and curses against her false lover, now she condescends to pitiable entreaty. The Trojan chief's defence, such as it is, is that he had never meant to stay. He is bound, the pilgrim of Heaven, for Latium. His father Anchises is warning him continually in the visions of the night not to linger here: and now the messenger of the gods in person has come to chide this fond delay.

The grand storm of wrath in which the injured queen bursts upon him in reply has severely taxed the powers of all Virgil's English translators. They seem to have felt themselves no more of a match for "the fury of a woman scorned" than Æneas was. Certainly they all fail, more or less, to give the fire and bitterness of the original. The heroics of Dryden suit it better, perhaps, than any other measure:—

"False as thou art, and more than false, forsworn!
Not sprung from noble blood, nor goddess-born,
But hewn from hardened entrails of a rock,
And rough Hyrcanian tigers gave thee suck!
Why should I fawn? what have I worse to fear?
Did he once look, or lend a listening ear,
Sigh when I sobbed, or shed one kindly tear?
All symptoms of a base ungrateful mind—
So foul, that, which is worse, 'tis hard to find.

Of man's injustice why should I complain?
The gods, and Jove himself, behold in vain
Triumphant treason, yet no thunder flies;
Nor Juno views my wrongs with equal eyes:
Faithless is earth, and faithless are the skies!
Justice is fled, and truth is now no more.
I saved the shipwrecked exile on my shore:
With needful food his hungry Trojans fed:
I took the traitor to my throne and bed:
Fool that I was!—'tis little to repeat
The rest—I stored and rigged his ruined fleet.
I rave, I rave! A god's command he pleads!
And makes heaven accessory to his deeds.
Now Lycian lots; and now the Delian god;
Now Hermes is employed from Jove's abode,
To warn him hence; as if the peaceful state
Of heavenly powers were touched with human fate!
But go: thy flight no longer I detain—
Go seek thy promised kingdom through the main!
Yet, if the heavens will hear my pious vow,
The faithless waves, not half so false as thou,
Or secret sands, shall sepulchres afford
To thy proud vessels and their perjured lord.
Then shalt thou call on injured Dido's name:
Dido shall come, in a black sulph'ry flame,
When death has once dissolved her mortal frame,
Shall smile to see the traitor vainly weep;
Her angry ghost, arising from the deep,
Shall haunt thee waking, and disturb thy sleep.
At least my shade thy punishment shall know;
And fame shall spread the pleasing news below."

But in this passage, if nowhere else, a French translator has surpassed all his English rivals. Possibly the fervid passion of the scene, worked up as it

is almost to exaggeration, is more akin to the genius of the French language.*

* Delille's fine translation of this passage is so little known to English readers that it may well find room in a note :—

" Non—tu n'es point le fils de la mère d'Amour ;
Au sang de Dardanus tu ne dois point le jour ;
N'impute point aux dieux la naissance d'un traitre—
Non, du sang d'héros un monstre n'a pu naître ;
Non.—Le Caucase affreux, t'engendrant en fureur,
De ses plus durs rochers fit ton barbare cœur,
Et du tigre inhumain la compagne sauvage,
Cruel ! avec son lait t'a fait sucer sa rage.
Car enfin qui m'arrête ? Après ses durs refus,
Après tant de mépris, qu'attendrais-je de plus ?
S'est-il laissé flechir à mes cris douloureux ?
A-t-il au moins daigné tourner vers moi les yeux
Prosternée a ses pieds, plaintive, suppliante,
N'a-t-il pas d'un front calme ecouté son amante ?
. . . . . .
Sans secours, sans asile, errant de mers en mers,
Par les flots en courroux jeté dans nos deserts,
Je l'ai reçu, l'ingrat ! des fureurs de l'orage
J'ai sauvé ses sujets, ses vaisseaux de naufrage,
Je lui donne mon cœur, mon empire, ma main :
O fureur, et voilà que ce monstre inhumain
Ose imputer aux dieux son horrible parjure,
Me parle et d'Apollon, et d'oracle, et d'augure !
Pour presser son depart, l'ambassadeur des dieux
Est descendu vers lui de la voûte des cieux :
Dignes soins, en effet, de ces maîtres du monde !
En effet, sa grandeur trouble leur paix profonde !
—C'en est assez ; va, pars ; je ne te retiens pas ;
Va chercher loin de moi je ne sais quels états :
S'il est encore un dieu redoubtable aux ingrats,
J'espère que bientôt, pour prix d'un si grand crime,
Brisé contre un écueil, plongé dans un abîme,
Tu paîras mes malheurs, perfide ! et de Didon
Ta voix, ta voix plaintive invoquera le nom."

We cannot, however, do better than return to Mr Conington's version for the sequel:—

> "Her speech half done, she breaks away,
> And sickening shuns the light of day,
> And tears her from his gaze;
> While he, with thousand things to say,
> Still falters and delays:
> Her servants lift the sinking fair,
> And to her marble chamber bear."

The Trojans prepare to depart; but the enamoured queen makes one more despairing effort to detain her faithless guest. She sends her sister to ask at least for some short space of delay—until she shall have schooled herself to bear his loss. Æneas is obdurate in his "piety." Then her last resolve is taken. She cheats her sister into the belief that she has found some spells potent enough to restrain the truant lover. Part of the charm is that his armour, and all that had belonged to him while in her company, must be consumed by fire. So a lofty pile is built in the palace-court; but it is to be the funeral pile of Dido. As she looks forth from the turret of her palace at day-break, she sees the ships of Æneas already far in the offing; for, warned again by Mercury that there will be risk of his departure being prevented by force if he delays, he has already set sail under cover of the night. For a moment the queen thinks of ordering her seamen to give chase; but it is a mere passing phase of her despair. She contents herself with imprecating an eternal enmity between his race and hers—fulfilled, as

the poet means us to bear in mind, in the long and bloody wars between Rome and Carthage.

"And, Tyrians, you through time to come
His seed with deathless hatred chase:
Be that your gift to Dido's tomb:
No love, no league 'twixt race and race.
Rise from my ashes, scourge of crime,
Born to pursue the Dardan horde
To-day, to-morrow, through all time,
Oft as our hands can wield the sword:
Fight shore with shore, fight sea with sea,
Fight all that are, or e'er shall be!"

With a master's hand the poet enhances the glories of his country by this prophetic introduction of the terrible Hannibal. The peaceful empire of Cæsar, before whom East and West bow, is thrown into the broadest light by reference to those early days when Rome lay almost at the mercy of her implacable enemy.

"Then, maddening over crime, the queen
With bloodshot eyes, and sanguine streaks
Fresh painted on her quivering cheeks,
And wanning o'er with death foreseen,
Through inner portals wildly fares,
Scales the high pile with swift ascent,
Takes up the Dardan sword and bares—
Sad gift, for different uses meant.
She eyed the robes with wistful look,
And pausing, thought awhile and wept:
Then pressed her to the couch and spoke
Her last good-night or ere she slept.
'Sweet relics of a time of love,
When fate and heaven were kind,

Receive my life-blood, and remove
These torments of the mind.
My life is lived, and I have played
The part that Fortune gave,
And now I pass, a queenly shade,
Majestic to the grave.
A glorious city I have built,
Have seen my walls ascend;
Chastised for blood of husband spilt,
A brother, yet no friend:
Blest lot! yet lacked one blessing more,
That Troy had never touched my shore!'" .

So she mounts the funeral pile, and stabs herself with the Trojan's sword, her sister Anna coming upon the scene only in time to receive the parting breath.

CHAPTER V.

THE FUNERAL GAMES.

Far off at sea, Æneas and his crew see the flames go up from Dido's palace.

> "What cause has lit so fierce a flame
> They know not; but the pangs of shame
> From great love wronged, and what despair
> Will make a baffled woman dare,—
> All this they know; and knowing tread
> The paths of presage vague and dread."

Not yet is their course clear for Italy. A storm comes on, and they make for refuge towards the friendly coast of Sicily, and run their vessels into a sheltered bay under Mount Eryx. Their return is gladly welcomed by their late host, Acestes, who receives the wanderers, as before, with princely hospitality, still mindful of his own Trojan blood. It chances that the morrow is the anniversary of the burial of Anchises; and Æneas, summoning an open-air council of his crews, announces to them his intention of commemorating his father by a solemn public

sacrifice. It is a day which—wherever his lot may be hereafter cast—he will ever keep holy; and not without some providential guidance, as he deems, has this opportunity been afforded him, by his being driven back to Sicily, of celebrating it on friendly soil under the auspices of his kinsman. There shall be nine days of sacrifice and prayer; then shall follow funeral games, with prizes at his own cost.

The sacrificial oxen are duly slain, and the libations poured at the tomb of Anchises; the bowls of new milk, of wine, and of blood, and the fresh spring flowers, which were reckoned acceptable offerings to the dead. Then Æneas lifts his voice in prayer to the shade of the hero, and a startling omen follows the invocation. A serpent, dappled with green and gold, glides out of the tomb, tastes of the offerings, and disappears again. Æneas sees in the creature the tutelary genius of the spot, or, it may be, the special attendant of his father's shade. In either case, he accepts its appearance as a good omen, and joyfully redoubles his devotions.

In the funeral games which follow, the Roman poet no doubt had two models in his mind. He was ambitious to reproduce, or perhaps to rival, in Roman song, for an audience of his countrymen, the grand description which his great master Homer had given of the games which Achilles celebrates in honour of the dead Patroclus. He wished also, there can be little doubt, to pay a poet's best compliment to his imperial patron, and to weave into his song, with such licence of embellishment as is allowed to all poets, a record of those

funeral games which Augustus had instituted in remembrance of his uncle, the great Dictator Julius. But Virgil is here very far from being a mere copyist from Homer. In lieu of the chariot-race, the great feature in the games of the Iliad, he has given us a galley-race, the incidents of which are quite as exciting, and to our modern comprehensions more thoroughly intelligible.

The day fixed for the great spectacle has arrived, and the Sicilians from far and near flock to it, some to take part in the games, and all to see. First of the various contests comes the galley-race, for which four of the fastest vessels in the fleet have entered—the Shark, the Centaur, the Chimæra, and the Scylla; each displaying, no doubt, as its figure-head, a representation of the monster whose name it bore. Their captains were men well known. Humouring a genealogical fancy of his Roman countrymen for tracing their descent to some one of the old Trojan colonists, —much after the fashion of English houses who try to find an ancestor on the Roll of Battle Abbey,—the poet tells us that three at least out of the four gave their names in due time to patrician houses in Rome. Mnestheus, who commands the Shark, left his name (certainly with considerable modification) to the *gens* or clan of Memmius. The captain of the Centaur, Sergestus, is in like manner the reputed ancestor of the Sergian clan, as Cloanthus, who sails the Scylla, is of the Cluentian. Only Gyas, the captain of the Chimæra, a bulky craft, "as big as a town," has no such genealogical honours assigned him.

The course lies out in the bay, and the competing vessels are to round a rock, covered at high tides, on which an oak has been set up, leaves and all, to serve as a mark for the steersmen. They take up their positions by lot, and await the signal, to be given by sound of trumpet. The picture of the start would suit, with wonderfully little alteration, the description of a modern University boat-race :—

"And now on rowing-bench they sit,
Bend to the oar their arms close knit,
And straining watch the sign to start,
While generous trembling fills each heart,
And thirst for victory.
Then, at the trumpet's piercing sound,
All from their stations onward bound :
Upsoars to heaven the oarsmen's shout,
The upturned billows froth and spout.
. . . . .
With plaudits loud and clamorous zeal
Echoes the woodland round ;
The pent shores roll the thunder-peal,
The stricken hills resound."

[Our modern oarsmen would certainly be wiser in this, that they would reserve their own breath (of which they would find considerable need towards the end of the race), and leave the whole of the shouting to be done by enthusiastic spectators.]

"First Gyas issues from the rout,
And holds the foremost place :
Cloanthus next ; his oarsmen row
More featly, but his bark is slow,
And checks him in the race.

Behind at equal distance strain
Centaur and Shark the lead to gain ;
And now the Shark darts forth, and now
The Centaur has advanced her bow ;
And now the twain move side by side,
Their long keels trailing through the tide."

So goes the race, until the galleys near the rock which they have to round. Gyas sees that his steersman, from over caution, is giving it too wide a berth, and that there is danger of the Scylla, more venturous, cutting in between. He shouts an order to keep closer in ; but the old seaman is somewhat obstinate, and it is very soon too late. Cloanthus has seen his advantage, shot round the rock at very close quarters, and now leaves Gyas in the Chimæra behind. Burning with fury, Gyas turns on his steersman, and pitches him into the sea. Happily he can swim, and the rock is close at hand ; he climbs upon it, and sits there dripping, to the considerable amusement of the spectators, who, like all lookers-on, seem unmercifully alive to the ludicrous element in any disaster.

Deprived of her helmsman, the huge Chimæra loses her course for a moment, and the two galleys in the rear are quick to take advantage of it. The Shark and Centaur are now rounding the rock almost side by side. But Sergestus, in his eagerness not to lose an inch of advantage, emulates the manœuvre of the Scylla too closely, and takes the Centaur too near. Her broadside of oars touch some of the jutting crags, the oars are broken, and the boat's head takes the rock, and hangs there hard and fast. All efforts of the

crew to get her off are unavailing. Mnestheus makes the dangerous turn safely on the outside of his rival, and his men, encouraged by success, redouble their efforts. The Chimæra has no good steersman to replace old Menœtes, who is still drying himself on the rock, and she is easily passed on the return course homewards. The struggle becomes now one of intense interest between Mnestheus and Cloanthus, who is still leading in the Scylla.

> "The cheers redouble from the shore;
> Heaven echoes with the wild uproar;
> Those blush to lose a conquering game,
> And fain would peril life for fame;
> These bring success their zeal to fan—
> They can, because they think they can."

The Shark has a stern chase, but the Scylla rows heavily, as we have been told, though she has the best crew, and the distance lessens at every stroke. Had the course been longer, the Shark would have made at least a dead heat of it. But as it is, amidst a storm of shouts, the Scylla wins. The turning-point of victory is one which does not approve itself to modern readers. The sea-deities interfere. Standing high upon his quarter-deck, Cloanthus lifts his prayer to the powers of ocean, not to permit his prize to be snatched from him at the last. He vows an offering of a milk-white bull and libations of red wine if they will help him at his need.

> "He said; there heard him 'neath the sea
> The Nereid train and Panope;

And with his hand divinely strong,
Portunus * pushed the bark along."

Possibly, after all, the poet only means us to understand that this was Mnestheus's explanation of his defeat—that the luck was against him.†

Cloanthus is crowned with bays as the victor of the day, and receives as his prize an embroidered robe of rare device—one of those miracles of divers colours of needlework in which the classical age seems to have as far excelled us as the mediæval ladies certainly did. Each crew receives three oxen and a supply of wine, while a talent of silver is divided amongst the men of the victorious Scylla. Mnestheus, as second in the race, wins a shirt of mail whose scales are of gold, which two of his attendants bear off with difficulty. The third of the captains has a pair of brazen caldrons and chased silver bowls. But while the awards are being distributed, the crippled Centaur has got off the rock, and is brought into harbour; and a Cretan slave-woman, with her twin children, is allotted, by the liberality of Æneas, as a consolation to her captain.

* One of the Roman sea-deities.

† Such explanations of an unfavourable result are not entirely unknown in the annals of modern boat-races. Reasons of a very apocryphal kind, if not so boldly mythological, have been assigned by modern captains of crews for their having been beaten. When an unsuccessful oarsman recounts his deeds to a sympathetic audience, and "tells how fields were" *not* won, he is apt to complain that, in some form or other, the river-gods were unjust. The state of the tide, or an intruding barge, or an imprudent supper on the part of "No. 7," takes the place of Panope and Portunus.

From the shore of the bay the company now move off to a natural amphitheatre close at hand, where the rest of the games are to be exhibited. Æneas takes his place high in the midst on an extemporised throne. For the foot-race, which comes first on the list, a crowd of competitors enter, both of native Sicilians and of their Trojan guests. Among the Sicilians are Salius and Patron, of Greek families settled in the island, and Helymus and Panopes, friends and companions of Acestes. The favourites among the Trojans are Diores, one of the many sons of Priam, and Nisus and Euryalus, noted for their romantic friendship, of which we shall hear more hereafter. The prizes in this contest are a war-horse with full trappings for the first, an Amazonian quiver for the second, and a helmet—the spoil of some conquered Greek on the plain of Troy—for the third. Nisus goes off with a strong lead, and has the race easily in hand. Next him, but at a long interval, comes Salius, Euryalus lying third, Helymus and Diores, close together, fourth and fifth. But when within a short distance of the goal, Nisus slips up in the blood and filth which has been left uncleared at the spot where the oxen have been sacrificed, and falls heavily to the ground. Knowing himself to be out of the race, he determines that his dear Euryalus shall win. So, by a piece of most unjustifiable jockeyship, which ought to have led to his being warned off from all such contests for ever after, he rises up at the moment that Salius is passing, and brings him down upon him. Euryalus has thus an easy victory, Helymus and Diores coming in second

and third. Very naturally, there is much dispute about the award. Salius complains loudly of unfair play; but young Euryalus is handsome and popular, and Diores backs his claim energetically; for it is very evident that if Salius is adjudged the first prize, Euryalus the second, and Helymus the third, then he —Diores—will be nowhere. So the result is accepted by the judges as it stands. But Æneas quiets the reasonable objections of Salius by the present of a lion's hide with gilded claws. Then Nisus makes appeal for compensation, pointing out to the laughing spectators the blood and dirt which are the very disagreeable evidences of his mishap, and protesting, with a consummate impudence which suits with the popular humour, that the whole thing was an accident, and that he, as the winner that would have been, is the real object of commiseration. If a fall deserves a prize, who has so good a claim as the man who fell first? Again the generosity of Æneas answers the appeal, and Nisus is presented with a shield of the finest workmanship, another Greek trophy. Successful knavery, if the knave be somewhat of a humourist withal, always wins a sort of sympathy from the public—in the Augustan epic as well as in modern comedy.

The prizes of the foot-race having been thus decided, the lists are cleared for the boxing-match. The boxing-match of the classical ancients was very different indeed from a modern set-to. The combatants certainly wore gloves; but these were meant to add weight and force to the blow, not to deaden it. The stoutest

champion of the modern prize-ring might shrink from encountering an antagonist whose fists were bound round with strips of hardened ox-hide. But such was the "cæstus" which was worn by the pugilists of this heroic age. The prizes are displayed by Æneas; for the conqueror, a bull with gilded horns; a helmet and falchion for the loser. Up rises the Trojan Dares, whose strength and skill are well known. The only man whom he acknowledged as his superior in the ring was one whom we might have least expected—Paris, who certainly bears no such reputation in Homer. At the great games held in honour of the dead Hector, of which we have the very briefest note in the Iliad, Dares had defeated the huge champion Butes, sprung from a race of athletes, and so mangled him that he died on the spot. No wonder that when he now steps forth, and goes through some preparatory sparring with the air, no one is found bold enough to put on the gloves with him. So, after a glance of triumph round the admiring circle, he advances to where the bull stands in front of Æneas, lays his hand upon its horns, and claims it as his rightful property in default of an antagonist.

King Acestes is concerned for the honour of Sicily. There is lying beside him on the grass a grey-haired chief named Entellus, sometime a pupil in this art of the great hero Eryx, who gave his name to the mountain which overhangs the place of assembly. Will he sit tamely by, Acestes asks, and see this Trojan boaster carry off the prize and the glory unchallenged? Entellus listens to his friend, and feels the old fire stir

within him. He would willingly enter the ring once more for the honour of his native island,—

> "But strength is slack in limbs grown old,
> And aged blood runs dull and cold.
> Had I the thing I once possessed,
> Which makes yon braggart rear his crest,
> Had I but youth, no need had been
> Of gifts, to lure me to the green."

He rises from his seat, however, and throws down in the arena, by way of challenge, a pair of ancient gloves of a most murderous pattern. Seven folds of tough bull-hide have knobs of lead and iron sewn inside them. They are the gloves in which the hero Eryx fought his fatal battle with Hercules, whom he had rashly challenged, and they still bear the blood-stains of Eryx's previous victories. Dares, stout champion as he is, starts back in dismay when he sees them, and Æneas himself takes them up and handles them with wonder. Entellus, however, will not insist on using these; and two pair of less formidable manufacture and of equal weight are produced, with which the two heroes engage. Virgil's description of this ancient prize-fight is highly spirited. It may remind some readers, who are old enough to remember such things, of the bulletins of similar encounters between a "light-weight" and a "heavy-weight," furnished in past days by sporting writers to our own newspapers—with the happy omission of the slang of the ring:—

> "Raised on his toes each champion stands,
> And fearless lifts in air his hands.

Their heads thrown back avoid the stroke;
Their mighty arms the fight provoke.
That on elastic youth relies,
This on vast limbs and giant size;
But the huge knees with age are slack,
And fitful gasps the deep chest rack.
Full many a blow the heroes rain
Each on the other, still in vain:
Their hollow sides return the sound,
Their battered chests the shock rebound:
'Mid ears and temples come and go
The wandering gauntlets to and fro:
The jarred teeth chatter 'neath the blow.
Firm stands Entellus in his place,
A column rooted on its base;
His watchful eye and shrinking frame
Alone avoid the gauntlet's aim.
Like leaguer who invests a town,
Or sits before a hill-fort down,
The younger champion tasks his art
To find the bulwark's weakest part;
This way and that unwearied scans,
And vainly tries a thousand plans.
Entellus, rising to the blow,
Puts forth his hand: the wary foe
Midway in air the mischief spied,
And, deftly shifting, slipped aside.
Entellus' force on air is spent:
Heavily down with prone descent
He falls, as from its roots uprent
A pine falls hollow, on the side
Of Erymanth or lofty Ide."

Acestes rushes in, like an attentive second, to raise his friend; and Entellus, roused to fury by his fall, renews the fight savagely:—

"Ablaze with fury he pursues
The Trojan o'er the green,
And now his right hand deals the bruise,
And now his left as keen.
No pause, no respite: fierce and fast
As hailstones rattle down the blast
On sloping roofs, with blow on blow,
He buffets Dares to and fro."

The unhappy Dares is borne off by his friends in miserable plight,—with half his teeth knocked out, blood streaming from his face, and hardly able to stand. All the savage has been roused in Entellus's nature by the fight. He is not half satisfied that his victim has escaped him. He would gladly have sacrificed him to the memory of his great master Eryx,—here, on the spot where that hero fought his own last fight. He lays his hand upon the bull, the prize of battle, and addresses Æneas and the spectators. Dryden's version of this passage, though it contains as much of Dryden as of Virgil, has justly been praised as very noble:—

"O goddess-born, and ye Dardanian host,
Mark with attention, and forgive my boast;
Learn what I was by what remains, and know
From what impending fate you saved my foe!
Sternly he spoke, and then confronts the bull;
And on his ample forehead aiming full,
The deadly stroke descending pierced the skull.
Down drops the beast, nor needs a second wound,
But sprawls in pangs of death, and spurns the ground.
'Then thus, in Dares' stead, I offer this:
Eryx, accept a nobler sacrifice;
Take the last gift my withered arms can yield—
Thy gauntlets I resign, and here renounce the field.'"

Mr Conington has well remarked that here we have, no doubt, "the veteran combatant's feelings as conceived by the veteran poet." He wrote the lines in his sixty-second year, and they harmonise pathetically with the words in his dedication: "What I now offer to your lordship is the wretched remainder of a sickly age." We are not obliged to take this self-depreciation too literally: whatever may be the shortcomings of Dryden's translation, the hand of the old poet had no more lost its vigour than that of Entellus.

The archers are next to try their skill. In this contest Acestes himself takes part. The other competitors are Mnestheus, whose crew were just now second in the race; Eurytion, a brother of Pandarus, the great archer of the Iliad, whose treacherous arrow, launched against Menelaus during the truce, had well-nigh turned the fate of Troy; and Hippocoon, of whom we know nothing more. He draws the first lot, and his arrow strikes the mast on which the mark, a live dove, is perched. Mnestheus shoots next, and cuts the cord which fetters her; and as she flies away a shaft from Eurytion's bow follows and kills her. There is nothing left for Acestes to do, but to shoot an arrow high in the air to show the strength of his hand and his bow. To the astonishment of the gazers, the arrow takes fire, and, leaving a trail of light on its path like a shooting-star, vanishes in the sky. It is an omen, as Æneas declares; it must be that the gods, in spite of facts, will him to be the real victor. So the prize — an embossed bowl, a present from the father of Hecuba to Anchises — is awarded to the

Sicilian prince, even Eurytion, the actual winner, acquiescing heartily in the arrangement. Yet the omen, as the poet tells us, really boded disaster; though whether to Sicily or to the Trojans, or how it was afterwards fulfilled, he does not stop to explain. Commentators have, as a matter of duty, done so for him; but it is hardly worth while to vex ourselves with their conjectures on a point on which Æneas himself was mistaken.

The games are over—at least, so far as the public programme seems to have gone. But Æneas has a surprise in store for his hosts. He whispers privately to the governor or tutor of his son Iulus, while he requests the company once more to clear the amphitheatre. Soon there sweeps into the ring the young chivalry of Troy—a goodly company of mounted youths, all of noble blood, who are to play out their play before their assembled seniors.

"They enter, glittering side by side,
And rein their steeds with youthful pride,
As 'neath their fathers' eyes they ride,
While all Trinacria's host and Troy's
With plaudits greet the princely boys.
Each has his hair by rule confined
With stripped-off leaves in garland twined:
Some ride with shapely bows equipped:
Two cornel spears they bear, steel-tipped:
And wreaths of twisted gold invest
The neck, and sparkle on the breast.
Three are the companies of horse,
And three the chiefs that scour the course:
Twelve gallant boys each chief obey,
And shine in tripartite array.

Young Priam first, Polites' heir,
Well pleased his grandsire's name to bear,
Leads his gay troop, himself decreed
To raise up an Italian seed:
He prances forth, all dazzling bright,
On Thracian steed with spots of white:
White on its fetlock's front is seen,
And white the space its brows between.
Then Atys, next in place, from whom
The Atian family descend:
Young Atys, fresh with life's first bloom,
The boy Iulus' sweet boy-friend:
Iulus last, in form and face
Pre-eminent his peers above,
A courser rides of Tyrian race,
Memorial gift of Dido's love.
Sicilian steeds the rest bestride
From old Acestes' stalls supplied.
The Dardanids with mingling cheers
Relieve the young aspirants' fears,
And gaze delighted, as they trace
A parent's mien in each fair face.

"And now, when all from first to last
Beneath their kinsfolk's eyes had past,
Before the assembled crowd,
Epytides shrills forth from far
His signal-shout, as if for war,
And cracks his whip aloud.
In equal parts the bands divide,
And gallop off on either side:
Then wheeling round in full career
Charge at a call with levelled spear
Again, again they come and go,
Through adverse spaces to and fro;
Circles in circles interlock,

And, sheathed in arms, the gazers mock
With mimicry of battle-shock.
And now they turn their backs in flight,
Now put their spears in rest,
And now in amity unite,
And ride the field abreast."

Such was the Ludus Trojæ—"The Game of Troy"—introduced, according to the poet, by Iulus in after-days into his new-built town of Alba, and borrowed from Alba by the Romans. Whatever its origin may have been, it was revived at Rome by Augustus, in his zeal for restorations of all kinds, as "an ancient and honourable institution." Princes of the imperial house—young Marcellus, and Tiberius the future emperor—rode, like Iulus, in the show; the emperor himself took a warm interest in it; and the eagerness of the young patricians to distinguish themselves in the various manœuvres before his eyes and those of their friends led to serious accidents. To one young horseman who was crippled by his fall Augustus gave a golden torque, and granted to him and his family permission to bear the name of "Torquatus"—renowned in the early annals of Rome. But other accidents happened, and led to such loud complaints that the sport was discontinued.

But while the eyes of Trojans and Sicilians are engaged with this spectacle, a terrible proceeding has taken place down on the shore. The ships, as usual, are drawn up there hard and fast upon the sand. The Trojan matrons are gathered near them, making moan for the good Anchises—for the games are a

spectacle for men. They are looking wistfully, too, across the sea, thinking how far they have sailed already, and how far they may yet have to sail. The watchful hate of Juno sees her opportunity. She despatches Iris down to them in the shape of one of their number—Beroe. She harangues them eloquently. How long will they be content to live this wandering life, in search of a distant home—which possibly has no existence but in deceitful prophecies?

The disguised Iris seizes a brand and rushes towards the ships. While the rest hesitate, one of their number detects the star-like eyes and celestial gait. It is not old Beroe—nay, she, to the witness's own knowledge, lies at this very moment sick in bed. It is no less than a visitor from heaven. They hesitate no longer: they snatch the embers from the altars, and in a moment the deed is done, and the galleys are in flames. The news is brought to Æneas just as the gay parade of youths is ending; and Ascanius gallops at once down to the shore, dashes his helmet on the ground that all may know him, and implores the furious women to stay their hands. Do they fancy they are burning the war-ships of the Greeks? His voice recalls them to themselves, and in guilty fear and shame they fly to hide themselves among the rocks and woods. Æneas rends his clothes, and appeals to Jupiter. The ruler of the sky hears, and sends down a thunder-shower which drenches everything on sea and shore, so that all but four galleys escape with little damage.

But Æneas is troubled at heart. May not this mad

instinct of the women be right, after all? Were it not better to rest here in Sicily, than wander on again over the weary ocean in quest of this Western Land? He takes counsel with the Nestor of the fleet —the aged Nautes—to whom the goddess of wisdom has given an understanding spirit beyond his fellows. The old seaman's motto is one of the poet's noblest utterances *—

> "Whate'er betides, he only cures
> The stroke of fortune who endures."

He bids his chief take counsel, too, with Acestes. In the visions of the night the shade of his father Anchises once more appears to him, and gives the same advice as Nautes. It is settled that the women and the old men, and all that are weary and faint-hearted, shall be left behind in Sicily, while the picked band of good men and true sail on with their leader into the west; thus their reduced number of ships will yet suffice them.† The damaged galleys are hastily repaired, and the foundations of a new town are marked out for the Trojan settlers: it is to be called Acesta, in honour of

* "Superanda omnis fortuna ferendo est."

† Virgil himself has no word of reproach for these weaker spirits, who thus preferred the rest of Sicily to the far-off hopes of Hesperia. But his impassioned pupil Dante is less merciful: he classes them in his "Purgatory" with the murmuring Israelites:—

> "First they died, to whom the sea
> Opened, or ever Jordan saw his heirs;
> And they who with Æneas to the end
> Endured not suffering, for their portion chose
> Life without glory."
>
> —Purg. xviii. (Cary.)

their kind host. The parting of the wanderers from their friends is a fine passage, finely rendered :—

" With kindliness of gentle speech
The good Æneas comforts each,
And to their kinsman prince commends
With tears his subjects and his friends.
Three calves to Eryx next he kills ;
A lambkin's blood to Tempest spills,
And bids them loose from land :
With olive-leaves he binds his brow,
Then takes his station on the prow,
A charger in his hand,
Flings out the entrails on the brine,
And pours a sacred stream of wine.
Fair winds escort them o'er the deep :
With emulous stroke the waves they sweep."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SIBYL AND THE SHADES.

The Sea-god, at Venus's intercession for her son, sends Æneas and his crews calm seas and prosperous gales. One victim only the Fates demand; Palinurus, the pilot of Æneas's ship, gives way to sleep during the quiet watches of the night, slips overboard, and is lost. The poet has clothed the whole story in a transparent mythological allegory, and which must have been intended to be transparent. Sleep is personified; Palinurus resists his first temptations; but the god waves over his eyes a bough steeped in dews of Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, and the unhappy steersman can hold out no longer. The accident happens near the shore of the twin Sirens, of whose seductions Homer has told us in the wanderings of Ulysses :—

> "A perilous neighbourhood of yore
> And white with mounded bones,
> Where the hoarse sea with far-heard roar
> Keeps washing o'er the stones."

Æneas discovers his loss by the unsteady course of

the galley, and takes the helm himself, until he brings the little fleet safe into the harbour of Cumæ. The crews disembark, with the joy which these seamen of old always felt when they touched land again, and proceed at once to search for water, cut wood, and light fires :—

> "Sage Dædalus—so runs the tale—
> From Minos bent to fly,
> On feathery pinions dared to sail
> Along the untravelled sky ;
> Flies northward through the polar heights,
> Nor stays till he on Cumæ lights.
> First landed here, he consecrates
> The wings whereon he flew
> To Phœbus' power, and dedicates
> A fane of stately view."

Here Æneas consults the mysterious Sibyl, whose oracular verses are referred to in Virgil's Pastoral already noticed. She figures under various names in classical story—that which she bears here is Deiphobè. Her dwelling is in a cave in the rock behind the temple, with which it communicates by a hundred doors. Within sits the prophetess on a tripod, where she receives the inspiration of the god. When the oracle is pronounced, the doors all fly open, and the sound comes forth. But there is one way in which she is wont to give her answers, against which Helenus has already warned her present visitors. She has a habit of jotting down her responses in verse upon the leaves of trees—each verse apparently on a separate leaf—and then piling them one upon another

in her cave. When the doors fly open, the gust of wind whirls the leaves here and there in all directions; and the ambiguities which are proper to all oracles are considerably increased in the process of rearranging the several leaves into anything like coherent order—the Sibyl herself disdaining all further interference. So that many of her clients go away without having received any intelligible answer at all, and from that time forth "hate the very name of the Sibyl." A modern writer,* whose poetical taste has made him one of the most interesting critics of Virgil, has thought that the confusion of the prophetic leaves was meant to symbolise the idea that the will of the gods was made known to mortals only in disjointed utterances, and under no regular law of order. Æneas, therefore, in his appeal to the prophetess, begs her specially to give her answer by word of mouth.

Deiphobè proceeds to the seat of augury, and goes through the terrible struggle which, according to all legends, invariably accompanied this form of prophecy. Even when she comes in view of the awful doors, the influence begins :—

> "Her visage pales its hue,
> Her locks dishevelled fly,
> Her breath comes thick, her wild heart glows ;
> Dilating as the madness grows,
> Her form looks larger to the eye,
> Unearthly peals her deep-toned cry,
> As breathing nearer and more near
> The God comes rushing on his seer."

* Keble.

The paroxysms increase after she has entered the cave, and is in the agonies of inspiration :—

" The seer, impatient of control,
Raves in the cavern vast,
And madly struggles from her soul
The incumbent power to cast.
He, mighty Master, plies the more
Her foaming mouth, all chafed and sore,
Tames her wild heart with plastic hand,
And makes her docile to command."

At last all the hundred doors fly open at once, and the voice of destiny comes forth. The wanderers shall reach Latium safely, but they shall wish they had never reached it.

" War, dreadful war, and Tiber flood
I see incarnadined with blood ;
Simois and Xanthus, and the plain
Where Greece encamped shall rise again :
A new Achilles, goddess-born,
The destinies provide,
And Juno, like a rankling thorn,
Shall never quit your side.

. . . . .

The old, old cause shall stir the strife—
A stranger bed, a foreign wife.
Yet still despond not, but proceed
Along the path where Fate may lead."

Æneas hears,—undismayed. He is a true hero so far, that he is always equal to his fate. One request he makes of the Sibyl,—that he may visit the shades below, the entrance to which is said to lie here, within the prophetess's domain, and there see again the face of

his father. Deiphobè consents, but not without the solemn warning, often quoted to point a far higher moral than the heathen poet was likely to have conceived—so often, that the Latin words themselves are probably familiar even to those who profess but little Latin scholarship :—

> "Facilis descensus Averni ;
> Noctes atque dies patet atra janua Ditis ;
> Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
> Hoc opus, hic labor est."

Their terseness and pathos are not easy to reproduce in any other language, but Mr Conington has done it as well, perhaps, as it could be done :—

> "The journey down to the Abyss
> Is prosperous and light ;
> The palace-gates of gloomy Dis
> Stand open day and night ;
> But upward to retrace the way,
> And pass into the light of day,—
> There comes the stress of labour—this
> May task a hero's might."

Few are they of mortal birth who, by the special grace of the gods, have achieved that desperate venture with success. Still, if Æneas is determined to attempt it, she will teach him the secret of the passage. Deep in the shades of the neighbouring forest there grows a tree which bears a golden bough, which he must find and carry with him into the regions of the dead ; it is the gift which Proserpine, who reigns there, claims from all who enter her court.

Accompanied by his faithful Achates, Æneas enters

the woods in quest of the golden bough. The search seems in vain, until two white doves, the birds of his goddess-mother Venus, make their appearance, and, leading the way by short successive flights, draw the seekers on to the wondrous tree, on which they at last alight. The hero makes prize of the golden branch, with which he returns to the Sibyl. Under her directions he offers the due sacrifices to the infernal powers—four black bulls, a barren heifer, and a black ewe-lamb—and then, still under the leading of the prophetess, with drawn sword in his hand, he enters the mouth of Hades.

"Along the illimitable shade
Darkling and lone their way they made,
Through the vast kingdom of the dead,
An empty void, though tenanted.
So travellers in a forest move
With but the uncertain moon above,
Beneath her niggard light,
When Jupiter has hid from view
The heaven, and Nature's every hue
Is lost in blinding night.

"At Orcus' portals hold their lair
Wild Sorrow and avenging Care;
And pale Diseases cluster there,
And pleasureless Decay,
Foul Penury, and Fears that kill,
And Hunger, counsellor of ill,
A ghastly presence they:
Suffering and Death the threshold keep,
And with them Death's blood-brother Sleep:
Ill Joys with their seducing spells
And deadly War are at the door;

The Furies couch in iron cells,
And Discord maddens and rebels;
Her snake-locks hiss, her wreaths drip gore.

"Full in the midst an aged elm
Broods darkly o'er the shadowy realm:
There dream-land phantoms rest the wing,
Men say, and 'neath its foliage cling.
And many monstrous shapes beside
Within the infernal gates abide;
There Centaurs, Scyllas, fish and maid,
There Briareus' hundred-handed shade,
Chimæra armed with flame,
Gorgons and Harpies make their den,
With the foul pest of Lerna's fen,
And Geryon's triple frame."

Then they come in sight of the rivers of Hell—Acheron, Cocytus, and Styx. The relative physical geography is somewhat confused by the poet, but it is the Styx on which the Ferryman of the Shades, the surly Charon,—

"Grim, squalid, foul, with aspect dire,
His eyeballs each a globe of fire,"—

plies his office of transporting the dead, performing the duties which Homer assigns to Mercury. But it is not all who even in death are allowed to pass the gloomy river. Only those who have received all due rites of burial can claim to enter the final abode of spirits at once; those unhappy ones who from any cause lie unburied have to wander, moaning and shivering, on the other side, for a space of a hundred years. So the Sibyl explains to Æneas, when he marks with surprise

how the shades all crowd eagerly to the boat-side praying for admission, and how the grisly ferryman drives some back with his oar. It is a sad thought to the hero; for amongst the rejected he sees some of his own companions who had perished in the storm off the coast of Carthage. Among them, too, he sees the figure of his late pilot Palinurus, who tells him the story of his unhappy fate; how, after all, he was not drowned, but, clinging to the piece of rudder which had broken away with him, had drifted three days and nights upon the waves, and had at last swam ashore on the fated coast of Italy. There the cruel natives had attacked and killed him, as he struggled up the cliffs; and now his corpse lies tossed to and fro amid the breakers in the harbour of Velia. He prays of his leader either to sail back there and to

"Give him a little earth for charity;"

or, by his influence with these Powers below, to get the law of exclusion relaxed in his favour. This last request the Sibyl rebukes at once, as utterly inorthodox and heretical; but comforts him at the same time with the assurance that the barbarous natives shall be plagued by heaven for their abominable deed, nor shall they find deliverance until they solemnly propitiate his shade by the erection of a mound and the establishment of funeral honours, and call the spot by the name of Palinurus—which name, the Sibyl declares, shall endure there for ever. The oracular voice in this case was not deceitful: the place, or supposed place, is still called "Punta di Palinuro." Virgil's

imperial audience might know it well, for Augustus was very nearly himself becoming a sacrifice on that very spot to the manes of the ancient pilot, many of his ships having been cast away on that very headland.

Charon is by no means gracious to the intruders. At first he warns them off. He has no pleasant recollections of former visitors from upper air, who, without the proper qualification of being previously dead and duly burnt or buried, had made their way against all rule into this abode of shadows. Hercules had come there, and carried off their watchful guardian Cerberus: Theseus and his friend Pirithous had even tried to do the same by Proserpine.

> "My laws forbid me to convey
> Substantial forms of breathing clay.
> 'Twas no good hour that made me take
> Alcides o'er the nether lake,
> Nor found I more auspicious freight
> In Theseus and his daring mate;
> Yet all were Heaven's undoubted heirs,
> And prowess more than man's was theirs.
> That from our monarch's footstool dragged
> The infernal watch-dog, bound and gagged;
> These strove to force from Pluto's side
> Our mistress, his imperial bride."

The Sibyl bids Charon have no fears of this kind now—Cerberus and Proserpine are safe from all designs on the part of her companion. This is Æneas of Troy, known for his "piety" as widely as for his deeds of arms. He does but seek an interview with his sire Anchises. But, if Charon be deaf to all such argu-

ments,—she shows the golden bough. The passport is irresistible. Sullenly, and without a word of reply, the dark boatman brings his craft to shore, and bids the freight of ghosts clear the decks and make room for his living passengers. The boat groans, its seams open and let in the water, as the substantial flesh and blood steps on board.* So, in the Iliad of Homer,

* The rickety state of Charon's boat was always a fertile source of wit to the freethinkers among the classical satirists. Lucian, in one of his very amusing dialogues, makes Charon complain of his passengers bringing luggage with them: "My boat is something rotten, look you, and lets in a good deal of water at the seams; if you come on board with all that luggage you may repent it—especially those of you who can't swim."—(Dial. Mort., x.) So in another dialogue Menippus thinks it hard to be asked to pay for his passage over, when "he helped to bale the boat all the way." It may be observed that the boat is said to be made of hide, stretched on a wooden frame, like the "coracles" of the Britons, still in use on some of the Welsh rivers. There may be some connection with an ancient tradition which would identify the "white rock" of which Homer speaks (Od., xxiv. 11) as marking the entrance to the regions of the dead with the cliffs of our own island—"Albion." A curious old legend of the coast of France gives some colour to the interpretation. There was a tribe of fishermen who were exempted from payment of tribute, on the ground that they ferried over into Britain the souls of the departed. At nightfall, when they were asleep (so the legend ran), they would be awakened by a loud knocking at their doors, and voices calling them, and feel a strange compulsion to go down to the seashore. There they found boats, not their own, ready launched, and to all appearance empty. When they stepped on board and began to ply their oars they found the boats move as though they were heavily laden, sinking within a finger's breadth of the water's edge; but they saw no man. Within an hour, as

the mortal horses and earthly chariot of Diomed groan and strain under their immortal burden, when Minerva takes her seat beside the champion.

Cerberus, in spite of Hercules, is at home again, and on the watch. His three heads and snake-wreathed neck are lifted in fury at the sight of strangers, and his bark rings through the shades. But the Sibyl has brought with her a medicated cake, which she throws down to him; he eats, and falls at once into a heavy sleep.

Then, led by the Sibyl, the Trojan chief passes through the various regions of the world below. First they hear the cries of those infants who but just knew life in the world above, and then were snatched away from its enjoyment.* Next them come those who have been condemned to death by an unjust judgment, and for whom Minos here sits as judge of appeals. In the next region are those unhappy ones—

it seemed, they reached the opposite coast—a voyage which in their own boats they hardly made in a whole day and night. When they touched the shore of Britain still they saw no shape, but they heard voices welcoming their ghostly passengers, and calling each of the dead by name and rank. Then having got rid, as it seemed, of their invisible freight, they put off again for home, feeling their boats so sensibly lightened that hardly more than the keel touched the water.—See Gesner's Notes on Claudian, iii. 123; Procopius, De Bell. Goth., iv. 20.

* We have here the foundation of the fanciful doctrine of a Limbo Infantum, held by some doctors of the Romish Church—a kind of vestibule to the greater Purgatory, in which were placed the souls of such children as died before they were old enough to be admitted to the sacraments.

"Who all for loathing of the day
In madness threw their lives away:
How gladly now in upper air
Contempt and beggary would they bear,
And labour's sorest pain!
Fate bars the way: around their keep
The slow unlovely waters creep,
And bind with three-fold chain."

Suicide was no crime in the early pagan creed; but Virgil has to a certain degree adopted the Platonic notion, that to take away one's own life was to desert the post of duty. It is remarkable how thoroughly he adopts Homer's view of the incomparable superiority of the life of the upper world to the best possible estate in the land of shadows. We have here again the sad lament of Achilles in the Iliad—that the life of a slave on earth was more to be desired than the colourless existence of the heroes in Elysium.

Passing from these outer circles, the travellers reach the "Mourning Fields," in which the poet places all the victims of love. If there was any doubt as to his view of the passion—that it was a lower appetite, excusable enough in man, but in a woman either to be reprobated or pitied according to circumstances—it would be set at rest by the characters of those victims with whom he peoples this unlovely region. Grouped together with such devoted wives as Evadne, who, when her husband fell in the Trojan war, slew herself for grief upon his funeral pile, and Laodamia, whose only crime was that by her too urgent prayers she won back her dead Protesilaus to her embrace for a few

fleeting moments, and died of joy in his arms,* we find the treacherous Eriphyle, who, for the bribe of a golden necklace, persuaded her husband Amphiarus to go to his predestined death in the same war, and even such disgraces to their sex as were Phædra and Pasiphae. In these Mourning Fields Æneas meets one whom he would, it may be conceived, have very gladly avoided. Half veiled in mist, seen dimly like the moon through a cloud, Dido stands before him there: and thus, for the first time, he is made certain of her death. Æneas is ready with regrets, and even tears.

> "She on the ground averted kept
> Hard eyes that neither smiled nor wept;
> Nor bated more of her stern mood,
> Than if a monument she stood."

At last, without a word, she turns from her false lover, and seeks in the dim groves the society of her dead husband Sichæus.

> "Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes reappears;
> Round the dear shade she would have clung—'tis vain,
> The hours are past—too brief, had they been years;
> And him no mortal effort can detain:
> Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
> He through the portal takes his silent way,
> And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse she lay.
>
> "By no weak pity might the gods be moved;
> She who thus perished, not without the crime
> Of lovers that in Reason's spite have loved,
> Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
> Apart from happy ghosts that gather flowers
> Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers."
>
> —WORDSWORTH'S 'Laodamia.

The Sibyl leads her companion on to the Field of the Heroes. There he sees the mighty men of old: the chiefs who fought against Thebes in the great siege which preceded that of Troy—Tydeus, and Adrastus, and Parthenopæus. There, too, are the shades of his own companions in arms, who fell in defence of their city. Among these last is one who has another tale to tell of the abominable Helen. It is Deiphobus, one of the many sons of Priam, to whom Helen had been given after the death of Paris. Æneas is shocked to see the unsubstantial shape of the prince bearing the marks of barbarous mutilation; his hands lopped, his face gashed, and his ears and nostrils cut off. (For, even in this shadowy existence, the ghosts all bear the marks of violent death — Dido's self-inflicted wound being specially mentioned.) Æneas asks the history of this terrible disfigurement, and Deiphobus tells it at some length: how the double traitoress, who was then his wife, had led Menelaus and his companion, the accursed Ulysses, to the chamber where he lay sunk in sleep on the disastrous night of the city's capture, and how they two had thus mangled his body.

But the Sibyl warns her companion, who stands absorbed in grief at his comrade's fate, that the permitted hours of their visit are fast passing away. She guides him on to where the path they are treading divides, leading in one direction to the Elysian Fields, in the other to Tartarus,—for the district which they have explored already is represented as of an entirely neutral character. On the left, Æneas sees

rise before him the broad bastions of Tartarus, round which flows the fiery stream of Phlegethon :—

> "In front a portal stands displayed,
> On adamantine columns stayed;
> Nor mortal nor immortal foe
> Those massy gates could overthrow.
> An iron tower of equal might
> In air uprises steep;
> Tisiphonè, in red robes dight,
> Sits on the threshold day and night,
> With eyes that know not sleep.
> Hark! from within there issue groans,
> The cracking of the thong,
> The clank of iron o'er the stones
> Dragged heavily along."

Æneas asks of his companion the meaning of these fearful sounds. They are the outcries of the wicked in torment. They may not be seen by human eyes; but Deiphobè herself has been shown all the horrible secrets of their prison-house by Hecate, when intrusted by that goddess with the charge of the entrance to the Shades. She tells Æneas how Rhadamanthus sits in judgment there, and forces the wicked to confess their deeds. Crimes successfully concealed on earth are there made manifest; then the culprit is handed over to the Furies for punishment. Such punishments are various as the crimes; strange and horrible in the cases of extraordinary offenders,—especially against the majesty of the gods. In the lowest gulf of all,—

> "Where Tartarus, with sheer descent,
> Dips 'neath the ghost-world twice as deep

As towers above earth's continent
The height of heaven's Olympian steep,"—

lie the twin giants, sons of Aloeus, who sought to storm heaven, and hurl Jupiter from his throne. There, too, is chained Salmoneus, who, counterfeiting the thunder and lightning of the Olympian ruler, was struck down by the force which he profanely imitated. Tityos, son of Earth, who dared to offer violence to the goddess Latona, lies there also, suffering the punishment assigned by the Greek mythologists to Prometheus :—

" O'er acres nine from end to end
His vast unmeasured limbs extend;
A vulture on his liver preys :
The liver fails not, nor decays :
Still o'er that flesh which breeds new pangs,
With crooked beak the torturer hangs,
Explores its depth with bloody fangs,
And searches for her food;
Still haunts the cavern of his breast,
Nor lets the filaments have rest,
To endless pain renewed."

Virgil is here more literally orthodox, and less philosophical in his creed, than his master Lucretius. For he, too, knew the story of Tityos, but saw in it only an allegory ; "every man is a Tityos," says the elder poet, " whose heart is torn and racked perpetually by his own evil lusts and passions." Other and various torments has the Sibyl seen; for the selfish and covetous, for the adulterer, for the betrayer of trust, and the spoiler of the orphan ; the feast ever spread

before the hungry eyes and ever vanishing; the rock overhanging the head of the guilty, ever ready to fall; the stone that has to be rolled with vast labour up the hill, only to roll back again for ever; and, most remarkable of all punishments, the doom of the restless adventurer Theseus for his attempt on Proserpine —to sit for ever in perpetual inactivity. And amidst them all rings out the warning voice of Phlegyas (condemned for having set fire to the temple of Apollo) from his place of torment :—

"Be warned—learn righteousness—and reverence heaven."

Here again we have, it may be, a protest against the teaching of Lucretius: a distinct rejection, on Virgil's part, of the materialistic doctrine which would deny a divine Providence and human responsibility.

The whole conception of Virgil's hell is grand and terrific. Highly material and sensational, it is hardly more so than mediæval divines and artists have represented; and indeed it is more than probable that, consciously or unconsciously, they often adopted pagan notions on the subject. In its moral teaching, whether the poet intended his descriptions to be taken in their literal sense or interpreted in the way of parable, his creed has at least the essential elements of truth.

But now the visitors turn their steps towards the Elysian fields, and after duly hanging up the golden bough at the gate for Proserpine's acceptance, they enter those abodes of the blest :—

"Green spaces, folded in with trees,
A paradise of pleasaunces;
Around the champaign mantles bright
The fulness of purpureal light;
Another sun and stars they know,
That shine like ours, but shine below."

There are assembled the illustrious dead—warriors who have died for their country; priests of unstained life; bards who have never perverted their powers; all who have been benefactors of mankind,—

"A goodly brotherhood, bedight
With coronals of virgin white."

Shadows as they are, all the items of their happiness are material. The games of the palæstra, the song of the bard, the care of ghostly horses and ghostly chariots, form the interests of this world of spirits; —the interests of earth, without earth's substantial realities. The poet found his imagination fail him, as it fails us all, when he tries to paint the details of an incorporeal existence.

Among these happy spirits the hero finds his father Anchises. He recognises and addresses him. Anchises had expected the visit, and receives him with such tears of joy as spirits may shed. But when Æneas strives to embrace him, the conditions of this spiritual world forbid it:—

"Thrice strove the son his sire to clasp;
Thrice the vain phantom mocked his grasp:
No vision of the drowsy night,
No airy current, half so light."

The occupation of Anchises in these regions is much more philosophical than that which is assigned to the other shades. He is contemplating the unborn rulers of the Rome that is to be; the spirits, as yet incorporeal, which are soon to receive a new body, and so go forth into upper air. Deep in a forest lies the river Lethe, and a countless multitude of forms are seen thronging its banks, to drink of the water of forgetfulness. Oblivious of all their past lives, they will thus take their place once more, in changed bodies, among the inhabitants of earth. The poet's adaptation of the Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration is none of the clearest; but he signifies that, after the lapse of a thousand years in a kind of Purgatory below, these spirits are again summoned to play their part, in new bodies, upon earth. Anchises can read their destinies; and he points out to his son the shadowy forms, like the kings in 'Macbeth,' that are to be the kings and consuls of the great Roman nation. First, those who shall reign in Alba—Silvius, that shall be born to Æneas in his new home, Capys, and Numitor; young Romulus, son of the war-god (he wears already the two-crested helmet in right of his birth), who shall transplant the sceptre to the seven-hilled city, and the kings that shall succeed him there. He shows him, too, those who shall make the future great names of the Republic—Brutus, the Decii, Camillus, Fabius, and the Scipios. But the centre of the picture is reserved for one great house:—

"Turn hither now your ranging eye:
Behold a glorious family,
Your sons and sons of Rome:
Lo! Cæsar there and all his seed,
Iulus' progeny, decreed
To pass 'neath heaven's high dome.
This, this is he, so oft the theme
Of your prophetic fancy's dream,
Augustus Cæsar, god by birth;
Restorer of the age of gold
In lands where Saturn ruled of old:
O'er Ind and Garamant extreme
Shall stretch his reign, that spans the earth.
Look to that land which lies afar
Beyond the path of sun or star,
Where Atlas on his shoulder rears
The burden of the incumbent spheres.
Egypt e'en now and Caspia hear
The muttered voice of many a seer,
And Nile's seven mouths, disturbed with fear,
Their coming conqueror know."

The future glories of Rome are described in a grand and well-known passage, to the majestic rhythm of which no English translator seems able to do full justice. The poet contrasts the warlike genius of his countrymen with the softer accomplishments of their rivals:—

"Others with softer hand may mould the brass,
Or wake to warmer life the marble mass;
Plead at the bar with more prevailing force,
Or trace more justly heaven's revolving course:
Roman! be thine the sovereign arts of sway,
To rule, and make the subject world obey;

Give peace its laws; respect the prostrate foe;
Abase the lofty, and exalt the low."

—SYMMONS.*

One personal sketch the poet's art had reserved to the last. Anchises points out to his visitor the shade that is to be the great Marcus Marcellus, five times consul—the "Sword of Rome," as Fabius was said to be its Shield, in the long wars with Carthage, and the conqueror of Syracuse. By his side moves the figure of an armed youth, tall and beautiful, but whose face is sad, and his eyes fixed on the ground. The company of shadows crowd round him, murmuring their admiration. Who is it? Æneas asks. It is the young Marcellus of the Empire, the hope and promise of Rome—the son of Octavia, sister of Augustus, and destined, as many thought, to be his successor. Unwillingly Anchises replies to his son's question:—

"Ah son! compel me not to speak
The sorrows of our race!
That youth the Fates but just display
To earth, nor let him longer stay:

* But none of the recognised translations seem to come so near the spirit of the original as Lord Macaulay's paraphrase—for of course it is only a paraphrase—in his lay of "The Prophecy of Capys:"—

"Leave to the sons of Carthage
The rudder and the oar;
Leave to the Greek his marble nymphs
And scrolls of wordy lore:
Thine, Roman, is the pilum;
Roman, the sword is thine;
The even trench, the bristling mound,
The legion's ordered line."

With gifts like these for aye to hold,
Rome's heart had e'en been overbold.
Ah! what a groan from Mars's plain
Shall o'er the city sound!
How wilt thou gaze on that long train,
Old Tiber, rolling to the main
Beside his new-raised mound!
No youth of Ilium's seed inspires
With hope as fair his Latian sires:
Nor Rome shall dandle on her knee
A nursling so adored as he.
O piety! O ancient faith!
O hand untamed in battle scathe!
No foe had lived before his sword,
Stemmed he on foot the war's red tide
Or with relentless rowel gored
His foaming charger's side.
Dear child of pity! shouldst thou burst
The dungeon-bars of Fate accurst,
Our own Marcellus thou!
Bring lilies here, in handfuls bring:
Their lustrous blooms I fain would fling:
Such honour to a grandson's shade
By grandsire hands may well be paid:
Yet O! it 'vails not now!"

He had died not long before, in his twentieth year, intensely lamented both by his family and the people.

The recital of the passage by the poet before his imperial audience had a more striking effect than even he himself could have expected. Octavia swooned away, and had to be removed by her attendants,—sending, however, magnificent presents afterwards to the poet for his eulogy on her dead son.*

* Virgil is said to have received from her what would amount,

The biographers add, that Augustus commanded Virgil to read no further on that day, and that the poet replied he had already ended the subject. He has not much more to say in this Sixth Book. Anchises gives his son some prophetic intimations as to his future fortunes in Italy, and then escorts his visitors to the gates of Sleep.

> "Sleep gives his name to portals twain :
> One all of horn, they say,
> Through which authentic spectres gain
> Quick exit into day,
> And one which bright with ivory gleams,
> Whence Pluto sends delusive dreams.
> Conversing still, the sire attends
> The travellers on their road,
> And through the ivory portal sends
> From forth the unseen abode."

The lines have been taken to mean that this visit to the shades was, after all, but a dream.

in our money, to above £2000—"a round sum," remarks Dryden, with something like professional envy, "for twenty-seven verses."

CHAPTER VII.

THE TROJANS LAND IN LATIUM.

It has been said that this poem combines in some degree the characters both of the Iliad and of the Odyssey. Up to this point we have had the wanderings and adventures of the Trojan hero: he has been the Ulysses of his own tale. Henceforth we have a tale of the camp and the battle-field, of siege and defence, and personal combat; and we are reminded, in almost every passage, of the stirring scenes of the Iliad.

Æneas, on his ascent into upper air, rejoins his crew, and the fleet, setting sail from Cumæ, enters the noble harbour of Caieta. Not that the place had any such name as yet; but there the hero buries his old nurse, and gives her name to the spot. Once more embarking, they pass the promontory of Circe, and hear, as they sail by, the roars and yells of the unhappy prisoners, changed by the spells of the sorceress into the shape of brutes, whom she holds in bondage there. They listen and shudder, and bless the favouring gale which bears them away from such perilous neighbourhood. Then, with the morrow's dawn, the fleet enters the

mouth of the Tiber. The picture of the galleys going up the stream is very beautiful:—

"The sea was reddening with the dawn:
The queen of morn on high
Was seen in rosy chariot drawn
Against a saffron sky,
When on the bosom of the deep
The Zephyrs dropped at once to sleep,
And, struck with calm, the tired oars strain
Against the smooth unmoving main.
Now from the deep Æneas sees
A mighty grove of glancing trees.
Embowered amid the silvan scene
Old Tiber winds his banks between,
And in the lap of ocean pours
His gulfy stream, his sandy stores.
Around, gay birds of diverse wing,
Accustomed there to fly or sing,
Were fluttering on from spray to spray
And soothing ether with their lay.
He bids his comrades turn aside
And landward set each vessel's head,
And enters in triumphant pride
The river's shadowy bed."

War is now the subject, and Homer is the model. Yet the Roman poet never shows his individual genius more strongly than in his treatment of the external scenery amidst which his action lies. He is still the worshipper of Nature, even while he sets himself to sing of battles, as he was in his Pastorals and Georgics. Homer tells us of the rivers of the Troad, Simois and Scamander—but it is only as they affect Hector or Achilles; his heart is all the while with the combat-

ants, not with the flowing river. Not so Virgil: with him we feel the cool breeze, we see the glancing shadow of the trees upon the river, we hear the flutter of the startled birds, and the long plash of the oars in the water: we sail with Æneas on a party of pleasure, rather than a voyage of conquest.

Latium is reached at last. They moor their galleys under the trees which fringe the river-banks, and land to make their morning meal. It is but a scant one. Such wild fruits as they can collect are laid upon the wheaten cakes which they have brought with them, and when the fruit is finished they attack the cakes themselves. "Lo!" exclaims Iulus—"we are eating our tables!" Joyfully Æneas recognises, in the boy's involuntary interpretation, the fulfilment of the curse of the Harpies,* and of certain strange words of his father Anchises, that when they were reduced to "eat their tables," then they had found their destined home, and might begin to build their city. This, then, is their promised rest. He pours libations and offers prayers to the gods of the land, and peals of thunder from a cloudless sky seem to announce that the invocation is accepted.

As soon as the moon rises, scouts are sent out to explore the country. The king of the land is old Latinus, whose palace is near at hand. He has one only daughter, Lavinia, for whose hand all the neighbouring princes have long been suitors. Turnus of Ardea, the gallant chief of the Rutuli, tallest and handsomest of all the rivals, has the goodwill of the

* See p. 66.

queen-mother; the maiden's own choice in such a matter being the last consideration which would enter into the thought of a Roman poet. When the Trojan chief has thus informed himself in some measure as to the localities, he sends a formal embassy to King Latinus's court, carrying presents in token of goodwill. Meanwhile he busies himself in hurriedly marking out the boundaries of his new town, and fencing it round with an earthen rampart and a palisade.

The strangers are ushered into the presence of Latinus, where he sits in his ancestral palace, surrounded by the cedar statues of the demi-gods and heroes of his line.

> "There too were spoils of bygone wars
> Hung on the portals,—captive cars,
> Strong city-gates with massive bars,
> And battle-axes keen,
> And plumy cones from helmets shorn,
> And beaks from vanquished vessels torn,
> And darts, and bucklers sheen."

He knows at once who his visitors are. Strange portents had long disturbed his court, and had warned him that his daughter must wed with no prince of Latian race: that a foreign host and a stranger bridegroom will come to claim her, and that the kings who shall spring from this union will spread the Latian name from sea to sea. He inquires the strangers' errand courteously, and the Trojan Ilioneus, as spokesman of the embassy, thus makes reply:—

> "We come not to your friendly coast
> By random gale o'er ocean tost,

Nor land nor star has made us stray
From our determined line of way:
Of steady purpose one and all
We flock beneath your city wall,
Driven from an empire, greater none
Within the circuit of the sun.
Jove is our sire: to Jove's high race
We, Dardans born, our lineage trace:
Jove's seed, the monarch we obey,
Æneas, sends us here to-day.
How fierce a storm from Argos sent
On Ida's plains its fury spent,
How Fate in dire collision hurled
The eastern and the western world,
E'en he has heard, whom earth's last verge
Just separates from the circling surge,
And he who, to his kind unknown,
Dwells midmost 'neath the torrid zone.
Swept by that deluge o'er the foam
For our lorn gods we ask a home:
A belt of sand is all we crave,
And man's free birthright, air and wave.
We shall not shame your Latin crown,
Nor light shall be your own renown,
Nor time obliterate the debt,
Nor Italy the hour regret
When Troy with outstretched arms she met.
I swear it by Æneas' fate,
By that right hand which makes him great,
In peace and war approved alike
A friend to aid, a foe to strike,
Full oft have mighty nations—nay,
Disdain not that unsought we pray,
Nor deem that wreaths and lowly speech
The grandeur of our name impeach—
Full oft with zeal and earnest prayers
Have nations wooed us to be theirs;

But Heaven's high fate, with stern command,
Impelled us still to this your land.
Here Dardanus was born, and here
  Apollo bids our race return:
To Tyrrhene Tiber points the seer
  And pure Numicius' hallowed urn.
These presents too our hands convey,
Scant relics of a happier day,
From burning Ilium snatched away.
From this bright gold before the shrine
His sire Anchises poured the wine:
With these adornments Priam sate
'Mid gathering crowds in kingly state,
The sceptre and the diadem:
Troy's women wrought the vesture's hem."

The king muses thoughtfully for a while: but he recognises the fulfilment of the auguries. Let Æneas come—he is welcome. If this be the bridegroom sent by heaven, he shall be more welcome still. He sends back the ambassadors in right royal fashion, all mounted on choice horses from his own stud, and with a chariot of honour to convey their chief to an interview.

Juno's relentless hatred is stirred once more. Will neither fire nor sword kill, nor water drown, these accursed Trojans? Shall she, the Queen of Heaven, be baffled by a mortal like Æneas? If it be written in the fates that he is to wed Lavinia, her marriage-dower shall be paid in Trojan and Latian blood. Venus shall find that she, like Hecuba, has borne a firebrand—that Æneas, like Paris, shall light a flame that shall consume his nation. If the powers of heaven will not take her part, she will seek aid from

hell. She summons the Fury Alecto from the shades below, and bids her sow strife between the people of Latínus and their foreign visitors.

The Fury, rejoicing in her errand, seeks the chamber of Latinus's queen, and darts into her breast one of the living serpents that serve her for coils of hair. Straightway the queen is seized with madness, and, after vainly trying to rouse her husband to oppose this foreign marriage, she rushes like a Bacchanal through the neighbouring villages, and calls upon the mothers of Latium to avenge her wrongs and rescue her daughter.

Next the Fury instils the same venom into the heart of Turnus, where he lies in his town of Ardea. He has been the champion of Latium against their enemies the Tuscans, and this is their gratitude—to give his promised bride to another! The young chief leaps from his couch, calls madly for his arms, and orders an instant march upon Latinus's capital. He will expel these intruders at once, and demand the princess from her father by force of arms.

Meanwhile—still at the instigation of Alecto—the seeds of quarrel have been sown between the men of Latium and their Trojan guests. There is a tame deer which has been nursed in the house of Tyrrheus, the ranger of the royal forest,—a pet and favourite with all the country-folk.

> "Fair Sylvia, daughter of the race,
> Its horns with leaves would interlace,
> Comb smooth its shaggy coat, and lave
> Its body in the crystal wave.

Tame and obedient, it would stray
Free through the woods a summer's day,
And home again at night repair,
E'en of itself, how late soe'er."

In evil hour Ascanius, riding out with a hunting-party, gets his hounds upon the scent, and shoots the poor animal as it floats quietly down the river in the noon-day heat. It has just strength to carry the Trojan arrow in its body to its mistress's door, and die moaning at her feet.* Tyrrheus and his household are mad with rage, and rouse the whole country-side against this wanton outrage, as they hold it, on the part of the strangers. The shepherd's horn sounds out its summons to the whole neighbourhood; and the angry rustics, when they hear the story, seize axes, staves, and such rude weapons as come first to hand, and attack the young prince and his hunting-party. The Trojans come out from their intrenchment to rescue their friends, and the fray now becomes a regular battle, no longer fought with stakes and hunting implements, but with sword and spear. Blood is soon shed; the rustic weapons are no match for the Trojan steel; and young Almo, the ranger's son, is carried home dead, amongst others. Almost a sadder loss is

* Andrew Marvell most likely borrowed his thought from the Roman poet in his graceful lines, "The Nymph's Complaint:"—

"The wanton troopers, riding by,
Have shot my fawn, and it will die.
Ungentle men! they cannot thrive
Who killed thee. Thou ne'er didst alive
Them any harm, alas! nor could
Thy death yet do them any good."

that of the good old yeoman Galæsus, who yokes a hundred ploughs, and whose character gives him even more influence than his wealth. He is slain as he stands between the combatants, vainly pleading for peace.

The bodies are carried through the city streets, as in a modern revolution, by way of demonstration. There they make their dumb appeal to the passions of the people—

> "Young Almo in his comely grace,
> And old Galæsus' mangled face"—

and the appeal is answered by a universal cry for "War!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MUSTER OF THE LATIN TRIBES.

Turnus arrives amongst them from Ardea at this critical moment, and shouts fiercely for instant battle. In vain does King Latinus quote the oracle, and refuse to fight against the destinies. He will be no party to a bloody and useless war. But the impetuosity of an angry populace is too strong for him. Powerless to stem the popular current, he nevertheless delivers his own soul, and abdicates his sovereignty. The guilt of the blood that shall be shed must rest on those who stir the war. He warns Turnus that he may yet live to rue the part he has taken, when too late: for himself, death will soon put an end to all troubles.

By an old tradition,—handed on, as the poet will have it, from these old days of Latium to the Rome of Augustus,—the powers of War were held to be confined within the gates of Janus, the porter of the Immortals, only to be let loose by solemn act of state authority.

> "Two gates there stand of War—'twas so
> Our fathers named them long ago—

The war-god's terrors round them spread
An atmosphere of sacred dread.
A hundred bolts the entrance guard,
And Janus there keeps watch and ward.
These, when his peers on war decide,
The consul, all in antique pride
Of Gabine cincture deftly tied
And purple-striped attire,
With grating noise himself unbars,
And calls aloud on Father Mars:
The warrior train takes up the cry,
And horns with brazen symphony
Their hoarse assent conspire."

Since Latinus will not do his office, Juno in person—so the poet has it—descends from heaven, smites upon the barred portals, and "lets slip the dogs of war."

"Ausonia, all inert before,
Takes fire and blazes to the core:
And some on foot their march essay,
Some, mounted, storm along the way;
To arms! cry one and all:
With unctuous lard their shields they clean,
And make their javelins bright and sheen,
Their axes on the whetstone grind;
Look how that banner takes the wind!
Hark to yon trumpet's call!
Five mighty towns, with anvils set,
In emulous haste their weapons whet:
Crustumium, Tibur the renowned,
And strong Atina there are found,
And Ardea, and Antemnæ crowned
With turrets round her wall.
Steel caps they frame their brows to fit,
And osier twigs for bucklers knit:

Or twist the hauberk's brazen mail
And mould them greaves of silver pale:
To these has passed the homage paid
Erewhile to ploughshare, scythe, and spade:
Each brings his father's battered blade,
  And smelts in fire anew:
And now the clarions pierce the skies:
From rank to rank the watchword flies:
This tears his helmet from the wall,
That drags his war-horse from the stall,
Dons three-piled mail and ample shield,
And girds him for the embattled field
  With falchion tried and true."

The whole remaining portion of this seventh book is in Virgil's most spirited style. And it is here that the harp of our northern minstrel answers best to Mr Conington's touch. The gathering of the clans—for it is nothing else—the rapid sketches of the chiefs as they pass in succession with their array of followers—the details of costume—the legendary tale which the poet has to tell of more than one of them as he passes them in review—even the devices borne on the shields,—are all features in which Scott delighted as thoroughly as Virgil, and which his well-known rhythm suits better than any other which a translator could choose. Some few portions of this stirring war-like diorama must content the readers of these pages. The first who passes is the terrible chief of Agylla, who fears neither god nor man, and whose notorious cruelties have so exasperated his own people against him that he is now a refugee in the court of Turnus:—

"Mezentius first from Tyrrhene coast,
Who mocks at heaven, arrays his host,
And braves the battle's storm;
His son, young Lausus, at his side,
Excelled by none in beauty's pride,
Save Turnus' comely form:
Lausus, the tamer of the steed,
The conqueror of the silvan breed,
Leads from Agylla's towers in vain
A thousand youths, a valiant train:
Ah happy, had the son been blest
In hearkening to his sire's behest,
Or had the sire from whom he came
Had other nature, other name!"

In the description of the next leader we have some notice of early heraldry:—

"Next drives along the grassy meads
His palm-crowned car and conquering steeds
Fair Aventinus, princely heir
Of Hercules the brave and fair,
And for his proud escutcheon takes
His father's Hydra and her snakes.
'Twas he that priestess Rhea bare,
A stealthy birth, to upper air,
'Mid shades of woody Aventine
Mingling her own with heavenly blood,
When triumph-flushed from Geryon slain
Alcides touched the Latian plain,
And bathed Iberia's distant kine
In Tuscan Tiber's flood.
Long pikes and poles his bands uprear,
The shapely blade, the Sabine spear.
Himself on foot, with lion's skin,

Whose long white teeth with ghastly grin
Clasp like a helmet brow and chin,
Joins the proud chiefs in rude attire,
And flaunts the emblem of his sire."

Coras and Catillus, twin-brothers from the old town of Tibur; Cæculus, from the neighbouring Præneste —reputed son of Vulcan, because said to have been found as an infant lying amidst the forge embers— whose following take the field with slings and javelins, each man with his left foot bare to give him firmer stepping-hold; Clausus the Sabine, from whom sprang the great house of the Claudii—some of whom assuredly were listening to the poet's recitation; Halæsus, of the seed of Agamemnon, sworn foe to all who bear the hated name of Trojan; and a host of chiefs of lesser name and inferior powers, join the march. Messapus, the "horse-tamer," brings with him a powerful band of retainers from many a city, who chant the deeds of their leaders as they go—

"Like snow-white swans in liquid air,
When homeward from their food they fare,
And far and wide melodious notes
Come rippling from their slender throats,
While the broad stream and Asia's fen
Reverberate to the sound again.
Sure none had thought that countless crowd
A mail-clad company;
It rather seemed a dusky cloud
Of migrant fowl, that, hoarse and loud,
Press landward from the sea.

. . . . . .

"Came too from old Marruvia's realm,
An olive-garland round his helm,
Bold Umbro, priest at once and knight,
By king Archippus sent to fight:
Who baleful serpents knew to steep
By hand and voice in charmèd sleep,
Soothed their fierce wrath with subtlest skill,
And from their bite drew off the ill.
But ah! his medicines could not heal
The death-wound dealt by Dardan steel:
His slumberous charms availed him nought,
Nor herbs on Marsian mountains sought,
And cropped with magic shears:
For thee Anguitia's woody cave,
For thee the glassy Fucine wave,
For thee the lake shed tears."

Nearly last of the warlike array, who all acknowledge him as their leader, comes the prince of the Rutuli, Æneas's rival and enemy:—

"In foremost rank see Turnus move,
His comely head the rest above:
On his tall helm with triple cone
Chimæra in relief is shown;
The monster's gaping jaws expire
Hot volumes of Ætnean fire:
And still she flames and raves the more
The deeper floats the field with gore.
With bristling hide and lifted horns,
Io, all gold, his shield adorns,
E'en as in life she stood;
There too is Argus, warder stern,
And Inachus from graven urn,
Her father, pours his flood."

He brings with him the largest host of all—a cloud of

well-armed footmen of various tribes, whose shields seem to cover the plain.

This pretty picture of Camilla, the Volscian huntress (whom Dryden very ungallantly terms a "virago"), vowed from her childhood to Diana—the prototype of Tasso's Clorinda, but far more attractive—closes at once the warlike pageant and the book:—

"Last marches forth for Latium's sake
Camilla fair, the Volscian maid,
A troop of horsemen in her wake
In pomp of gleaming steel arrayed;
Stern warrior-queen! those tender hands
Ne'er plied Minerva's ministries:
A virgin in the fight she stands,
Or wingèd winds in speed outvies;
Nay, she could fly o'er fields of grain
Nor crush in flight the tapering wheat,
Or skim the surface of the main
Nor let the billows touch her feet.
Where'er she moves, from house and land
The youths and ancient matrons throng,
And fixed in greedy wonder stand,
Beholding as she speeds along:
In kingly dye that scarf was dipped:
'Tis gold confines those tresses' flow:
Her pastoral wand with steel is tipped,
And Lycian are her shafts and bow." *

* No doubt the Camilla of the Roman poet is a reminiscence of the Amazon Penthesilea in Homer, just as the fairy footstep, that left no trace on sea or land, is borrowed from those wondrous mares of Erichthonius to whom Homer assigns the same performance. But the copy far surpasses the original in grace and beauty. Our English poets have made free use of this fancy of the footsteps of beauty: none more sweetly than Jonson

The story of Camilla's infancy, which is given us subsequently, is quite in accordance with this description. Her father, driven from his territory, like Mezentius, by an angry people, had carried his infant daughter with him in his flight. Hard pressed by his pursuers, he came to the banks of a river. To swim across the stream, though swollen by winter torrents, were easy for himself: but how to carry his child? With brief prayer and vow to the huntress Diana, he tied her to a spear, and threw her across. The child alighted safely on the other side, and the father followed. Fed on mares' milk, and exercised from infancy in the use of the bow, Camilla had grown up in the forest, vowed to maidenhood and to Diana.

in his 'Sad Shepherd,' where Æglamour laments his lost Earinè :—

> "Here she was wont to go, and here, and here—
> Just where those daisies, pinks, and violets grow;
> The world may find the spring by following her,
> For other print her airy steps ne'er left.
> Her treading would not bend a blade of grass,
> Or shake the downy blow-bell from his stalk:
> But like the south-west wind she shot along,
> And where she went the flowers took thickest root,
> As she had sowed them with her odorous foot."
> — The 'Sad Shepherd,' Act I. sc. 1.

CHAPTER IX.

ÆNEAS MAKES ALLIANCE WITH EVANDER.

The turn of events gives the Trojan chief much natural disquiet. All Latium is in arms against his little force of adventurers. He lies down within his lines to a disturbed and anxious rest, where he has a remarkable vision. A figure rises, wrapped in a grey mantle, with his brows crowned with reed. It is "Father Tiber," the tutelary genius of the Rome that shall be. He bids his visitor be of good cheer: his coming has been long looked for. He renews, for his encouragement, the old oracle of Anchises:—

> "On woody banks before your eye
> A thirty-farrowed sow shall lie,
> Her whole white length on earth stretched out,
> Her young, as white, her teats about,
> Sign that when thirty years come round
> 'White Alba' shall Ascanius found."

He will find allies, too, within reach. A colony from Arcadia have migrated to Italy under their king Evander, and have founded in the neighbouring mountains

a city called Pallanteum. He will reach the place by sailing up the stream, and from them, ever at feud with their Latian neighbours, he will get the aid he requires.

Æneas wakes from sleep, arms the crews of two of his galleys, and begins his voyage up the course of the friendly Tiber, who purposely calms his waves and moderates his current. The sow with her thirty young is soon found, and duly sacrificed, as the river-genius has warned him, to propitiate the wrath of Juno. Evander, with his son Pallas and all his people, is keeping high festival to Hercules, when the masts of the Trojan galleys are suddenly seen among the trees as they turn a bend of the river. The strangers are hailed by Pallas; and Æneas, bearing in his hand the olive-bough of a suppliant, is led by the young chief before his father. In a well-studied speech he claims kindred with the Arcadian hero, albeit a Trojan and Greek might at first sight seem natural enemies. Dardanus of Troy traced his descent from Atlas — Evander's genealogy goes back to the same great ancestor. Their mutual enmity with the Latians should be also a bond of union: and lo! Æneas has shown his goodwill and confidence in thus placing himself fearlessly in Evander's power. Evander is the Nestor of the Æneid;—somewhat given to long stories and reminiscences of his own youth. He had known his present visitor's father well, in the years gone by, when the Trojan court had visited the country of Priam's sister Hesionè.

"A boy was I, a stripling lad,
My cheek with youth's first blossom clad;
I gazed at Priam and his train
Of Trojan lords, and gazed again:
But great Anchises, princely tall,
Was more than Priam, more than all.
With boyish zeal I schemed and planned
To greet the chief, and grasp his hand.
I ventured, and with eager zest
To Phenæus brought my honoured guest.
A Lycian quiver he bestowed
At parting, with its arrowy load,
A gold-wrought scarf, and bridle-reins
Of gold, which Pallas still retains."

He tells his visitor also, at very considerable length, the story of Hercules slaying the monster Cacus, son of Vulcan, half man and half beast, whose breath was as flames of fire, and whose diet was human flesh—the prototype of the giants of later fiction. He points out also to his guest the local features of the country—for they are standing on the site which is to be Rome, and Pallanteum is to become the Palatine mount of future history. Whatever of mythical legend the poet mixed up in his topography, he knew the interest with which his patrician audience—for antiquarianism was almost as fashionable in the court of the Cæsars as it is now—would listen while, by the mouth of Evander, he dwelt on the old historic localities of the imperial city: the Carmental gate, named after the nymph who was Evander's mother; the grove where Romulus in after-days made his first "Asylum" for the motley band whom he gathered round him; the

Tarpeian rock; the hill on which was to stand the Capitol; the Janiculum, with its Saturnian walls, the key of Rome's defences. "Now"—says the poet, speaking in his own person of the glories of the great city in his own day,—

> "Now all is golden—then 'twas all
> O'ergrown with trees and brushwood tall.
> E'en their rude hinds the spot revered:
> . . . . . .
> Here in this grove, these wooded steeps,
> Some god unknown his mansion keeps;
> Arcadia's children deem
> Their eyes have looked on Jove's own form,
> When oft he summons cloud and storm,
> And seen his ægis gleam."

A league is made between the Trojans and their new friends. King Evander confesses that his own power is small, but Æneas has arrived at a fortunate conjuncture. The Etruscans of Agylla, who have just expelled their tyrant Mezentius for his cruelties, have determined to pursue him to the death. But they have been warned by their soothsayer to choose a foreign leader; and here they are at the gates of Pallanteum, come to beseech Evander to head their expedition. He is himself too old—his son Pallas too inexperienced; he at once presents to them Æneas as a heaven-sent leader. The omens are all favourable, and both troops and commander are well pleased. Æneas selects the best of his crew, whom Evander furnishes with war-horses; the rest he sends back in the galleys to bear the tidings of his own movements

to his son Iulus, and to charge him and the Trojans to keep close within their rampart, in case of attack during his absence. Taking command of his Etruscan allies, and followed by four hundred Arcadian horse under the young Pallas, whom his father gladly sends, as the youths of noble houses were sent in the days of knighthood, to learn the art of war under so great a captain, Æneas sets out on his march for Turnus's capital. The old king does not part from his son without sad misgivings; he has trusted Æneas with more than his life.

Venus has not been neglectful of her son. She has persuaded Vulcan to forge for him weapons and armour of such sort as only the immortal smith can make. The fire-god can never resist her blandishments; and he goes down to the forge where the Cyclops are ever at work, in the caverns beneath the Lipari Islands, off the coast of Sicily. There is much business in hand there already. Some of the one-eyed workmen are forging bolts for Jupiter, composed of four elements,—

> "Three rays they took of forky hail,
> Of watery cloud three rays,
> Three of the wingèd southern gale,
> Three of the ruddy blaze." *

Some are finishing a war-chariot for Mars; others are shaping an ægis for Minerva—a shield of dragon's scales and rings of gold. But their master bids them

* The thunderbolt is usually represented on ancient coins and medallions with twelve rays.

put all these tasks aside; War, and Wisdom, and even Government itself, must be content to come to a standstill, until the behests of Beauty have been obeyed.

The idea of the Shield of Æneas, which Venus comes and lays before him while he sleeps, is of course borrowed directly from Homer's Shield of Achilles. But the working out of it is quite original. Vulcan's subject, in this case, is not, as in the Shield of the Iliad, an epitome of human life, but a prophetic history of Rome. The whole passage in which it is elaborately described is of remarkable beauty even to our modern taste, and upon a Roman's ear and imagination must have had a wonderful effect. The story is told in eight (or perhaps nine) compartments, filled with the leading events in the great city's existence. The two first contain the birth of Romulus, and the union of the Romans with the Sabines, which began with the seizure of the Sabine women:—

"There too the mother-wolf he made
In Mars's cave supinely laid:
Around her udders undismayed
The gamesome infants hung,
While she, her loose neck backward thrown,
Caressed them fondly, one by one,
And shaped them with her tongue.
Hard by, the towers of Rome he drew
And Sabine maids in public view
Snatched 'mid the Circus games:
So 'twixt the fierce Romulean brood
And Tatius with his Cures rude
A sudden war upflames.

And now the kings, their conflict o'er,
Stand up in arms Jove's shrine before,
From goblets pour the sacred wine,
And make their peace o'er bleeding swine."

The doom of Mettius the Alban, and the keeping of the Tiber bridge by Horatius against Lars Porsena, occupy the two next compartments. Next comes the defence of the Capitol against the Gauls by Manlius :—

"A silver goose in gilded walls
With flapping wings announced the Gauls;
And through the wood the invaders crept,
And climbed the height while others slept.
Golden their hair on head and chin:
Gold collars deck their milk-white skin:
Short cloaks with colours checked
Shine on their backs: two spears each wields
Of Alpine make: and oblong shields
Their brawny limbs protect."

In the succeeding compartments are wrought the procession of the Salii with the sacred shields, and the regions of the world below, where Catiline lies in torment, while Cato has his portion with the just. And within the whole, round the *umbo* or boss of the shield, there runs a sea of molten gold in which sport silver dolphins, framing the centre design—the glories of Augustus :—

"There in the midmost meet the sight
The embattled fleets, the Actian fight:
Leucate flames with warlike show,
And golden-red the billows glow.

Here Cæsar, leading from their home
The fathers, people, gods of Rome,
  Stands on the lofty stern:
The constellation of his sire
Beams o'er his head, and tongues of fire
  About his temples burn,
With favouring Gods and winds to speed
  Agrippa forms his line:
The golden beaks, war's proudest meed,
  High on his forehead shine.
There, with barbaric troops increased,
Antonius, from the vanquished East,
  And distant Red-sea side,
To battle drags the Bactrian bands
And Egypt; and behind him stands
  (Foul shame!) the Egyptian bride."

There the gods of Rome—conspicuous amongst whom is the archer Apollo, the tutelary deity of the house of Cæsar—put to flight the dog-headed Anubis, and the other monstrous gods of Egypt. There, too, is blazoned the "triple triumph" of Augustus, graced by a long procession of captives of all tribes, from Scythia to the Euphrates.

"Such legends traced on Vulcan's shield
  The wondering chief surveys:
On truth in symbol half revealed
  He feeds his hungry gaze,
And high upon his shoulders rears
The fame and fates of unborn years."

CHAPTER X.

TURNUS ATTACKS THE TROJAN ENCAMPMENT.

Æneas had been right in his forebodings of danger. Turnus has heard of the chief's absence, and takes advantage of it to lead his force at once against the new-built fortification in which the rest of the Trojans lie. His first attempt is to burn their galleys, where they lie drawn ashore on the river-bank, close to their lines. But the ships are built of the sacred pines of Ida, the special favourites of the great goddess Cybele; and she has endued them, by favour of Jupiter, with the power of transformation into sea-nymphs when their work is done. No sooner do the torches of the enemy touch them than they slide off into the water, and in their new shape float out to sea. Even this portent does not scare the leader of the Rutuli. "Lo!" he cries—"Heaven takes from our enemies even their hopes of flight!" He does but draw his leaguer all the closer round the Trojan lines. Throughout the night the watch-fires blaze at close intervals, and captains of the guard, each with a hundred men, are set at their several posts to prevent the escape of the prey

before the general attack which is ordered for the morning.

But the Rutulian chieftains grow weary of a monotonous duty. They have store of wine in their camp, and they bring it out to cheer their night-watch. The sounds of noisy revelry soon rise from every station, until, as the revellers are gradually overpowered by sleep, all is lulled into unusual silence.

Two Trojan sentinels have watched anxiously every sound and movement in the enemy's lines. They are Nisus and his young friend Euryalus,—late among the competitors in the foot-race—inseparable in peace or war. Nisus sees, as he thinks, an opportunity for stealing through the Rutulian guards, and bearing news to Æneas at Pallanteum of the peril in which his son and his companions lie. He is a keen sportsman, and knows the forest by-paths well. He confides his design to Euryalus, but has no notion of taking the youth with him to share the danger. He, on the other hand, insists upon accompanying his friend. The consent of Iulus and his elder counsellors is readily obtained. Let them but bring back Æneas to the rescue, and no rewards and honours shall be too great for the pair. Turnus's horse and armour, Latinus's royal demesne, captives of price, shall be the guerdon of Nisus: for Euryalus, — the prince will adopt him henceforth as his personal esquire and companion in arms. One only request the youth has to make. He has an aged mother in the camp—the only one of the elder matrons who refused to be left in safety with Acestes in Sicily, and whom no dangers

could separate from her son. Will the prince promise her solace and protection, should harm befall Euryalus on the way? The answer of Iulus is given in tears; he has no mother left, and the mother of Euryalus shall be to him as his own. He girds the youth with the sword from his own side, and the friends set out upon their perilous errand, escorted to the gates by the Trojan captains with prayers and blessings.

The enterprise might have succeeded, had not the two friends been tempted, by the helpless state in which they found the Rutulian camp, to slaughter their sleeping enemies as they passed. Rhamnes and Remus—names to be borne hereafter by more historic actors in the history of Rome—with a crowd of victims of lesser note, fall by the swords of Nisus and his companion. Euryalus even stops, with a young man's vanity, to put on the glittering belt which he has stripped from one of his victims, and the helmet of the sleeping Messapus. Thus precious time is lost, and the moonlight streams upon them as they clear the Rutulian lines, and take the path, which Nisus knows, for Pallanteum.

A detachment of the enemy's cavalry is on the march to join Turnus. The glimmer of the moonlight on Euryalus's helmet—his new prize—betrays the friends as they try to steal by, and they are challenged at once by Volscens, the commander. They fly to the neighbouring wood; but the horsemen surround it, and though Nisus escapes them, it is only to find that his friend has fallen into their hands. He rushes back, and in the wild hope of

effecting a rescue, hides himself in the thicket, whence he launches two spears with fatal effect upon the party who are dragging along their prisoner. Enraged at the sudden attack, and seeing no enemy in the darkness, Volscens lays hold upon Euryalus, and vows revenge. Nisus rushes from his cover, and implores them to turn their swords on him, and to spare a youth whose only crime has been his friendship.

"In vain he spoke: the sword, fierce driven,
That alabaster breast had riven.
Down falls Euryalus, and lies
In death's enthralling agonies:
Blood trickles o'er his limbs of snow;
His head sinks gradually low:
Thus, severed by the ruthless plough,
  Dim fades a purple flower:
Their weary necks so poppies bow,
  O'erladen by the shower.
But Nisus on the midmost flies,
With Volscens, Volscens in his eyes:
In clouds the warriors round him rise,
  Thick hailing blow on blow:
Yet on he bears, no stint, no stay;
Like thunderbolt his falchion's sway:
Till as for aid the Rutule shrieks
Plunged in his throat the weapon reeks:
The dying hand has reft away
  The lifeblood of its foe.
Then, pierced to death, asleep he fell
On the dead breast he loved so well."

With the first dawn Turnus leads his forces to the attack—the heads of Nisus and Euryalus borne in front upon the points of spears, so savage is the Rutu-

lian at the slaughter made by them amongst his sleeping comrades. The mother of Euryalus has heard the news, and sees the ghastly trophies from the ramparts. Iulus performs his promise, and the frantic woman is, under his personal directions, tenderly removed. He himself becomes the hero of the day. The archer's craft, his love of which had led to the feud with the Latins, is turned to good service in the defence of the camp. Numanus, a brother-in-law of Turnus, is loudly taunting the Trojans in front of their lines:—

"Twice captured Phrygians! to be pent
Once more in leaguered battlement,
And plant unblushingly between
Yourselves and death a stony screen!
Lo, these the men that draw their swords
To part our ladies from their lords!
What god, what madness brings you here
To taste of our Italian cheer?
No proud Atridæ leads our vans:
No false Ulysses talks and plans:
E'en from the birth a hardy brood,
We take our infants to the flood,
And fortify their tender mould
With icy wave and ruthless cold.
Early and late our sturdy boys
Seek through the woods a hunter's joys:
Their pastime is to tame the steed,
To bend the bow and launch the reed.
Our youth, to scanty fare inured,
Made strong by labour oft endured,
Subdue the soil with spade and rake,
Or city walls with battle shake.
Through life we grasp our trusty spear:
It strikes the foe, it goads the steer:

Age cannot chill our valour: no,
The helmet sits on locks of snow;
And still we love to store our prey,
And eat the fruits our arms purvey.
You flaunt your robes in all men's eyes,
Your saffron and your purple dyes,
Recline on downy couch, or weave
The dreamy dance from morn to eve:
Sleeved tunics guard your tender skins,
And ribboned mitres prop your chins.
Phrygians!—nay rather Phrygian fair!
Hence, to your Dindymus repair!
Go where the flute's congenial throat
Shrieks through two doors its slender note,
Where pipe and cymbal call the crew;
These are the instruments for you:
Leave men, like us, in arms to deal,
Nor bruise your lily hands with steel."

Iulus, after brief prayer to Jupiter, sends an arrow through the boaster's temples. But Apollo, taking the shape of the boy's guardian, Butes, warns him to be content with this first triumph: such weapons, says he of the silver bow, with that jealousy of mortals common to all pagan divinities, are not for boys.

Attack and defence are maintained vigorously on either side. Turnus is everywhere, dealing death where he comes. Mezentius, the infidel, tries to fire the palisade: Messapus, "the horse-tamer," calls for ladders to scale it. A detachment of Volscians form a "tortoise," by linking their shields like a penthouse over their heads, and under this cover try to plant their ladders; but the Trojans hoist a huge rock aloft, and dash it down with murderous effect upon

the roof of shields, crushing the bearers underneath. A tall wooden flanking-tower is set on fire by Turnus, and falls over, with its defenders, among the enemy. Two only survive the fall, one of whom—a slave-born warrior, who bears a blank shield—flings himself into the Rutulian ranks, and dies there fighting against overwhelming numbers. The other, Lycus, a swift and active runner, reaches the rampart of the intrenchment, and nearly succeeds in climbing over amongst his friends, when Turnus grasps him and bears him off, in spite of the missiles showered down by his sympathising comrades.

Pandarus and Bitias, two brothers of gigantic stature, have charge of one of the gateways of the intrenched camp. They throw the double gates wide open, and take their stand, one on either side, within. Fast as the more venturous spirits among the enemy rush through, they are either felled by the giant warders, or, if they escape these first, are slain inside by the other Trojans, who even carry the battle outside the gates. Word comes to Turnus of the increasing boldness of the enemy. He rushes to the rescue, slays right and left, and brings Bitias to the ground by hurling at him a huge *falarica*—a spear used in the great catapults which formed the artillery of those days. His brother Pandarus by main strength closes the great gates, shutting out some of his unfortunate friends as well as his enemies, and shutting in, to the dismay of the Trojans, their terrible enemy. When he sees Turnus, however, he rushes upon him to avenge his brother's death; but the Rutulian cleaves him with his keen

falchion down to the chin. Then he turns on the dismayed defenders, and smites them right and left. Had he but bethought himself then to open the gates once more, and let his comrades in, so cowed were the Trojans at the moment that their defeat was certain. But all his heart is set on slaughter, and the Trojans, rallied by Mnestheus (the hero of the galley-race), soon find out that he is alone. Nevertheless he fights his way gallantly towards the river.

"The Trojans follow, shouting loud,
And closer still and closer crowd.
So when the gathering swains assail
A lion with their brazen hail,
He, glaring rage, begins to quail,
And sullenly departs:
For shame his back he will not turn,
Yet dares not, howsoe'er he yearn,
To charge their serried darts:
So Turnus lingeringly retires,
And glows with ineffectual fires.
Twice on the foe e'en then he falls,
Twice routs and drives them round the walls:
But from the camp in swarms they pour,
Nor Juno dares to help him more.
. . . . . .
At length, accoutred as he stood,
Headlong he plunged into the flood.
The yellow flood the charge received,
With buoyant tide his weight upheaved,
And cleansing off the encrusted gore,
Returned him to his friends once more."

CHAPTER XI.

THE DEATH OF PALLAS.

The scene changes to Olympus, where Jupiter holds a council of the gods. He is as much troubled as in the Iliad with the dissensions in his own court, and holds the balance with difficulty between his queen and his daughter, each unscrupulous in their partisanship. Venus complains to him bitterly of the peril in which her son Æneas stands, by reason of Juno's machinations. That goddess replies, with considerable show of reason, that Æneas has brought his troubles upon himself; that Latinus and Turnus and Lavinia were all going on peacefully before he came; and that—if the whole history of the Trojans must needs be discussed again—Venus herself, by her instrument Helen, was the mother of all the mischief. The king of the gods somewhat loses patience, and swears by the great river of Styx, with the awful nod which shakes Olympus, that Trojan and Rutulian shall even fight it out, and the Fates shall decide the question. So he dissolves the Olympian convocation.

The fight at the Trojan encampment is renewed in

the morning as fiercely as ever. But succours are on their way. The ships of the Etruscan leader Tarchon —the name which future kings of Rome were to bear with little alteration—have been sailing all night down the Tyrrhenian Sea, under their new-found chief Æneas. His galley leads the van; and with him in the stern—for he takes the helm himself—sits young Pallas, hearing him tell of the great deeds of old. The poet gives us something like a muster-roll of the Etruscan chiefs and their followings; more interesting perhaps to the ear of a Roman, who would catch up here and there some historical allusion to a place or family with which he claimed some connection, than to the modern reader, who can have no such sympathies. He gives us, too, the figure-heads from which the ships of the most noted captains took their names: the Tiger —a favourite, it would seem, to our English nautical taste even down to the present day—the Centaur, the Apollo, the Triton, the Mincius—the last-named from the river that flowed by Virgil's own town of Mantua,—

"Fair town! her sons of high degree,
Though not unmixed their blood;
Three races swell the mingled stream:
Four states from each derive their birth:
Herself among them sits supreme,
Her Tuscan blood her chiefest worth."

Æneas has a strange rencontre in his night-voyage. Suddenly there rises round his galley a circle of water-nymphs—they are his own vessels, thus transformed, and their errand is to warn him of the danger in which

Iulus and his people lie. The sight which meets his eyes as he enters the Tiber at daybreak confirms their tidings: he sees the camp surrounded by enemies. Standing high upon his deck, he raises aloft the wondrous shield. The Trojans recognise in the signal the arrival of the help they so sorely need, and welcome it with prolonged shouts. Then their enemies note it also,—and the fight grows fiercer still. Tarchon—who seems to act as captain of the fleet under Æneas as admiral—looks out a good place to beach the galleys, bids the men give way with a will, and runs them well up, the forepart high and dry—all, except the gallant captain himself, whose vessel breaks her back and goes to pieces.

Turnus has left the command of the storming-party to his lieutenants, and gone down himself with a picked force to oppose Æneas's landing. The Arcadian contingent, unused to fighting on foot and half in the water, get into confusion, and turn. Young Pallas gallantly rallies them, for the honour of his countrymen. He himself wins his spurs, in this his first field, by deeds which would become Æneas himself. One brief episode in his exploits is pathetic enough. There are fighting on the Rutulian side the twin-brothers Thymber and Larides:—

> "So like, the sweet confusion e'en
> Their parents' eyes betrayed;
> But Pallas twin and twin between
> Has cruel difference made;
> For Thymber's head the steel has shorn;
> Larides' severed hand forlorn
> Feels blindly for its lord:

The quivering fingers, half alive,
Twitch with convulsive gripe, and strive
To close upon the sword."

Young Lausus, the son of the tyrant Mezentius, is leading his men against Pallas, when a greater soldier interposes between the two young heroes. Turnus comes, and Pallas meets him eagerly—yet not without full consciousness of the inequality of the combat. He hurls his spear, so strongly and truly that it penetrates through Turnus's shield, and slightly grazes his body. Then Turnus launches his weapon in return, and it goes right through the metal plates and tough ox-hide of the shield, and through the corselet of Pallas, deep into his breast, and the young prince falls to the ground writhing in his dying agony. Turnus stands astride of the corpse, and shouts triumphantly to the discomfited Arcadians. Yet there is something generous, according to the fierce code of the times, in his treatment of his dead enemy; he neither strips the armour, nor makes any attempt to prevent the Arcadians from carrying off the body. He bids them bear it home to King Evander for burial; only with a warning as to what fate awaits the allies of the foreigner:—

"Who to Æneas plays the host,
Must square the glory with the cost."

One trophy he takes from the person of the dead prince—a belt richly embroidered in gold with the tale of the daughters of Danaus. He girds it on over his armour, unconscious of the influence it will have upon his own fate.

Æneas, in a different quarter of the field, hears of the death of his young esquire, and furiously hews his way towards Turnus. All who cross his path, veteran chiefs and young aspirants to glory, alike go down before him, and no appeal for mercy checks his hand. Eight prisoners he takes alive; but only with the intent to slay them as victims at the funeral pile of Pallas. But the rival champions do not meet as yet. Juno, fearing the issue of an encounter with Æneas in his present mood, cheats the eyes of Turnus with a phantom in his enemy's shape. When Turnus meets it in the fight, the shape turns and flies towards the ships, pursued by him with bitter taunts on Trojan cowardice. One galley has her gangway down, and the false Æneas takes refuge on board. Turnus follows; when the moorings are loosed by an invisible hand, the galley floats down stream, and the Rutulian, raving and half determined to end his disgrace by suicide when he finds out how he has been cheated, is swept along the coast to his own town of Ardea.

Mezentius takes his place, and seconded by his son Lausus, spreads slaughter amongst the Trojan ranks. But a spear cast by the strong hand of Æneas lodges in the groin of the father, and the son gallantly rushes forward to cover his retreat. Æneas warns the youth to stand back—some thought, it may be, of Pallas makes him unwilling to take the younger life; but Lausus dares his fate, and the Trojan falchion, driven home through his light shield and broidered vest—

> "The vest his mother wove with gold"—

reaches the young chief's heart. Æneas can be generous too. He will not strip the body; nay, he chides the cowardice of Lausus's comrades, who hesitate to lift the dying youth, and himself raises him carefully from the ground, and gives him what comfort may be gathered from the fact that he has met his death "at Æneas's hand."

Mezentius hears of the death of his son as he lies by the river-bank bathing his wound. With a cry of agony the father bewails his own crimes, which had thus brought death upon his innocent son. Crippled as he is, he calls for his good horse Rhæbus, who has ever hitherto borne him home victor from the battle. To-day they two will carry home the head of Æneas, or fall together. He charges desperately upon the Trojan, who is right glad to meet him. Thrice he wheels his horse round his wary enemy, hurling javelin after javelin, which the Vulcanian shield receives on its broad circumference, and retains until it looks, in the poet's language, like a grove of steel. At last Æneas launches a spear which strikes Mezentius's horse full in the forehead, and poor Rhæbus rears, and rolling over in his dying agonies, pins his master to the ground. Æneas rushes in upon the fallen champion, who, disdaining to ask quarter, bares his throat to the sword, and dies as fearlessly as he has lived.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DEATH OF CAMILLA.

Æneas's first care, after raising a trophy crowned with the arms of the slain Mezentius, is to send home to Evander the body of his son. A picked detachment escort it to Laurentum with all honour, wrapped in robes of gold — embroidered robes, wrought by the hands of the unfortunate Dido. The youth's charger, Æthon, is led behind the bier, and his lance and helm are also borne in the procession; a custom which we have borrowed from the Romans, and retain to this day in our military funerals. Æthon weeps copious tears for his dead master; an incident not so entirely due to a poet's imagination as it may seem, since the historian Suetonius tells us that some favourite horses of Julius Cæsar showed the same tokens of grief, and refused their food, just before his death. Another feature in the obsequies of Pallas is happily obsolete; the prisoners whom Æneas had taken alive with this express object follow behind the corpse, to be sacrificed at the funeral pile. There was nothing horrible to the polished courtiers of Augustus in such a thought. Even

in that age of refinement and civilisation, the emperor himself, after the defeat of Antony's party at Perusia, was said to have slaughtered three hundred prisoners in honour of the great Julius, to whom altars were raised as a demi-god. True, the story was probably an invention of political opponents; but the mere fact that such a story could be invented and believed, marks strongly the cruel temper of the age. The old king receives back, in bitter grief, all that remains to him of the gallant son whom he had so lately sent forth to his first fatal field: and he charges Æneas, by the mouth of the envoys, to avenge him on his son's murderer—for this he only waits to close his own eyes.

A truce of twelve days is agreed upon between the armies for the burial of their dead. The Latins have meanwhile sent an embassy to ask aid from Diomed, the hero of the Trojan war, who has come home and settled in Italy. He is paying the penalty of having wounded Venus in the battle before Troy, and is not allowed to reach his native Argolis. He warns the ambassadors that it is not good to war against the race from which Æneas comes—he, for his part, will have no more of it. At this crisis the Latins hold a council of war. Their king advises a compromise with the enemy—a grant of land on which to settle, or a new equipped fleet to carry the fortunes of Troy yet further on. Then there rises in the council one Drances, a better orator than warrior, who boldly proposes to give the princess Lavinia to the bridegroom whom the gods have sent. Or, let Turnus meet Æneas in single

combat—why are the rest to suffer for his pride? Is all Latium to be steeped in blood that Turnus may have a princess to wife? Turnus is not slow to reply. He will go forth to meet the Trojan willingly—will Drances follow him?

Even while they thus debate, Æneas has left his intrenchments by the Tiber, and is marching on the city. The queen with her daughter and the terrified women betake themselves to the temples, while Turnus sets himself to marshal his allies for the defence. While some are left to guard the walls, the whole force of cavalry ride out to meet the enemy. His best lieutenant for this service is the huntress Camilla. She leads her light Volscian horse, supported by Messapus with his heavier Latins, to meet the cavalry of Æneas, while Turnus with his squadron lays an ambuscade for him in a wooded valley. Camilla, with her fair staff of followers, Tulla and Tarpeia—names of ominous sound to Roman ears—deals slaughter in the enemy's ranks in no feminine fashion.

> "A Phrygian mother mourned her son
> For every dart that flew."

But, fierce Amazon as she is, she is tempted by a woman's love of ornament. There is a Trojan, one Chlorus, priest as well as man-at-arms, conspicuous for the brilliant accoutrements of his charger and himself. His horse is covered with chain-armour clasped with gold; and purple and saffron, and gold embroidery—the full splendours of Asiatic costume which he affects—mark him out as a tempting prey. It might have

been, the poet suggests, a desire to deck some of her national temples with such distinguished spoils,—or it might have been, he admits, only a woman's fancy to wear them herself,—but she singles him out and chases him over the field, regardless of her own safety. Arruns the Tuscan has long sought his opportunity, and his spear reaches Camilla as she gallops in headlong pursuit of her gay enemy.

"In vain she strives with dying hands
To wrench away the blade:
Fixed in her ribs the weapon stands,
Closed by the wound it made.
Bloodless and faint, she gasps for breath;
Her heavy eyes sink down in death;
Her cheek's bright colours fade."

So dies Camilla; and the Volscian horse are so disheartened by her loss that they turn and fly to the city, so closely pursued by the Trojans that the gates have to be hastily closed, shutting out in many cases friends as well as foes. Turnus leaves the cover of the wood to attack Æneas, but night falls on the plain before their forces meet.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LAST COMBAT.

The spirit of the Latins is wellnigh broken—they feel that their cause is a failing one. And Turnus sees angry eyes bent upon him, as the cause of this ill-fated war. He will take all hazards, then, upon himself: there shall be no more blood shed of Latin or Rutulian —unless it be his own. He declares his intention to Latinus—he will meet Æneas in single combat. The old king is reluctant to allow it: Queen Amata, with tears and prayers, begs him to forego his resolution. Lavinia herself—such is the entire reticence of the maiden nature in epic story—speaks no word throughout the whole. But, as modern critics have long discovered, there is no question but that she has a sentiment for Turnus. She hardly could have a thought of Æneas, whom she had never seen. When she hears her mother's appeal to the Rutulian prince, she does almost more than speak—she blushes, through her tears.

> "Deep crimson glows the sudden flame,
> And dyes her tingling cheek with shame.

So blushes ivory's Indian grain,
When sullied with vermilion stain:
So lilies set in roseate bed
Enkindle with contagious red."

These last four lines, in Mr Conington's version, read like a bit of Waller or Lovelace—and yet they are a fairly close translation of the original.

The challenge is sent to Æneas, and by him joyfully accepted. There shall be solemn truce between Trojan and Rutulian, while the rival champions do battle for the princess and the kingdom. Turnus, too, has one weapon of Vulcan's forging—his father's sword. But now, in his haste for the combat, he snatches up and girds on a blade of less divine temper. The lists are set between the two lines, and the oaths duly sworn. Æneas calls the gods to witness, that if the victory falls to Turnus, the Trojans on their part shall retire at once to Evander's colony, and make war no more on Latium. Or even if he himself be the conqueror, he will not treat the Latins as a conquered race:—

"I will not force Italia's land
To Teucrian rule to bow;
I seek no sceptre for my hand,
No diadem for my brow:
Let race and race, unquelled and free,
Join hands in deathless amity."

But at once, before the rivals meet, by the instigation of Juno the truce is broken on the part of the Rutulians. They have a strong fear that their own champion, young and gallant as he is, is no equal

match in arms for the great Æneas: he is but moving to his death. So speaks the seer Tolumnius, and points to an omen on the river bank: an eagle swooping down upon a flock of swans, and bearing one off in his talons, but put to flight when they turn in a body and pursue him. Æneas is the bird of prey—they are the unwarlike swans; let them but turn on him, and he too will fly. The seer is not content with the mere exposition of auguries; at once he hurls his own javelin into the Trojan ranks, and brings down his man. The fight speedily becomes general. Æneas, unarmed and bareheaded, rushes between the ranks, and is wounded by an arrow while he calls loudly on his own men to keep the truce. None knew, or cared to know, from whose hand the arrow came: for no man, says the poet, was ever heard to boast of such a coward's shot.

Then, while Æneas is led to the camp, faint and bleeding, by his son Iulus and his faithful Achates,—while the aged leech, Iapis, vainly tries all his skill upon the wound—for the barb will not quit the flesh, —Turnus spreads slaughter among the Trojan ranks. But only for a while. Venus drops a healing balsam into the water with which her son's wound is being bathed; at once the arrow-head drops out, and the hero stands up sound and whole. Again he dons the Vulcanian armour, and re-enters the battle. The Rutulians give way before him, but he scorns to smite the fugitives, and seeks out only Turnus. And Turnus, pale and unnerved—for the presage of his fate lies heavy upon his soul—has no longer any mind to

meet him. It is very strange, to our modern notions of heroism, to see this infirmity of resolution in a tried soldier and captain like Turnus. But the heroes of these elder days lose heart at once when they feel their star is no longer in the ascendant. Turnus, like Hector in the Iliad, shrinks from the fate which he foresees.

Turnus has a sister, Juturna, a river-nymph and demi-goddess, a favourite of Juno, who has warned her if possible to save her brother. She now takes the place of his charioteer, and, while she drives rapidly over the field, takes care to keep him far from Æneas, who is calling loudly on him to halt and keep his compact of personal duel. At last the Trojan leader, baffled in this object, throws all his forces suddenly on the town, which lies almost at his mercy, stripped of its defenders, and bids his captains bring torches and scaling-ladders. A horseman, sorely wounded in the face, brings word of this new danger to Turnus as he is wheeling madly over the battle-field, and implores him to come to the rescue. He looks round towards the walls, and sees the flames already mounting. Then he rallies once more the old courage which had so strangely failed him. He sees his fate as clearly as before, but he will meet it. He knows his sister now, too late, in his charioteer; but he will fly no longer—"Is death such great wretchedness, after all?" He leaps from his chariot, as he knows, to meet it, lifts his hand, and shouts to his Rutulians to stay their hands, and the ranks of both armies divide before him as he makes towards

the part of the wall where Æneas is leading the attack.

"But great Æneas, when he hears
The challenge of his foe,
The leaguer of the town forbears,
Lets town and rampart go,
Steps high with exultation proud,
And thunders on his arms aloud;
Vast as majestic Athos, vast
As Eryx the divine,
Or he that roaring with the blast
Heaves his huge bulk in snow-drifts massed,
The father Apennine."

Trojans, Latins, and Rutulians look on in awe and admiration as the two chiefs advance to try this last ordeal of battle. Each hurl their spears—without effect; then Turnus draws his sword, and they fight on hand to hand—

"Giving and taking wounds alike,
With furious impact home they strike;
Shoulder and neck are bathed in gore:
The forest depths return the roar.
So, shield on shield, together dash
Æneas and his Daunian foe;
The echo of that deafening crash
Mounts heavenward from below."

But the faithless sword which Turnus had so carelessly girded on instead of his father's good weapon, though it has done him fair service on the crowd of meaner enemies, breaks in his grasp when he essays it on the

armour of Æneas, and thus helpless, he takes to flight, Æneas hotly pursuing.

"Five times they circle round the place,
Five times the winding course retrace;
No trivial game is here: the strife
Is waged for Turnus' own dear life."

A dark-plumaged bird is seen to hover round the devoted head of the Rutulian chief, half blinding him with its flapping wings. It is a Fury whom the king of the gods has sent in that shape to harass him. At length, in his flight, he finds a huge stone, which not twelve men of "to-day's degenerate sons" could lift.

"He caught it up, and at his foe
Discharged it, rising to the throw,
And straining as he runs.
But 'wildering fears his mind unman;
Running, he knew not that he ran,
Nor throwing that he threw;
Heavily move his sinking knees;
The streams of life wax dull and freeze:
The stone, as through the void it past,
Failed of the measure of its cast,
Nor held its purpose true.
E'en as in dreams, when on the eyes
The drowsy weight of slumber lies,
In vain to ply our limbs we think,
And in the helpless effort sink;
Tongue, sinews, all, their powers bely,
And voice and speech our call defy:
So, labour Turnus as he will,
The Fury mocks the endeavour still.

Dim shapes before his senses reel:
On host and town he turns his sight:
He quails, he trembles at the steel,
Nor knows to fly, nor knows to fight:
Nor to his pleading eyes appear
The car, the sister charioteer.

"The deadly dart Æneas shakes:
His aim with stern precision takes,
Then hurls with all his frame;
Less loud from battering-engine cast
Roars the fierce stone, less loud the blast
Follows the lightning's flame.
On rushes as with whirlwind wings
The spear that dire destruction brings,
Makes passage through the corselet's marge,
And enters the seven-plated targe
Where the last ring runs round.
The keen point pierces through the thigh,
Down on his bent knee heavily
Comes Turnus to the ground."

The Rutulian prince confesses his defeat, and asks his life, in no craven spirit, for the sake of his aged father—bidding Æneas think of old Anchises. The conqueror half relents, when his eyes fall upon something which makes that appeal worse than useless.

"Rolling his eyes, Æneas stood,
And checked his sword, athirst for blood.
Now faltering more and more he felt
The human heart within him melt,
When round the shoulder wreathed in pride
The belt of Pallas he espied,
And sudden flashed upon his view
Those golden studs so well he knew,

Which Turnus in his hour of joy
Stripped from the newly-slaughtered boy,
And on his bosom bore, to show
The triumph of a satiate foe.
Soon as his eyes at one fell draught
Remembrance and revenge had quaffed,
Live fury kindling every vein,
He cries with terrible disdain:
'What! in my friend's dear spoils arrayed,
To me for mercy sue?
'Tis Pallas, Pallas guides the blade;
From your cursed blood his injured shade
Thus takes the atonement due.'
Thus as he spoke, his sword he drave
With fierce and fiery blow
Through the broad breast before him spread;
The stalwart limbs grow cold and dead;
One groan the indignant spirit gave,
Then sought the shades below."

So closes the Æneid. Does any reader complain that the poet has not carried the story further? With the death of Turnus the catastrophe is complete. The princess of Latium is the prize of the victor; and the loves of Æneas and Lavinia are certainly not of that romantic character that we need care to follow them. The Trojans are settled in Italy—two races under one name. For so has Jupiter promised, as some indulgence to the feelings of his queen, that the old Latin name shall at least not be merged in the detested name of Trojan, and on such terms has the goddess reluctantly acquiesced in the settlement of the wanderers on Italian ground. Latins, not Trojans, are to rule

the world. Thus has the poet combined the indigenous glories of his country with the grand descent of its rulers from the old mythical heroes of Troy.

Yet there is a singular vein of melancholy to be traced in the words of Æneas, when he parts with his son before he goes to his last victory. They are perhaps the noblest words which the poet has put into his mouth, and they have something of the sadness which more or less affects all true nobility:—

> "In his mailed arms his child he pressed,
> Kissed through his helm, and thus addressed:
> 'Learn of your father to be great,
> Of others to be fortunate.'"

The old tradition—well known, no doubt, to Virgil's audience and first readers—was that the son, not the father, lived to enjoy the sovereignty of Latium. The hero of many vicissitudes was not held to have settled down into the peaceful rest which he looks forward to, throughout the poet's story, as the end of all his campaigns and wanderings. The Rutulians, so said the legends, would not yet bow to the foreign usurper; and Æneas fought his last battle with them on the banks of the river Numicius, and then, like so many of the favourite heroes of a people—disappeared; either carried, living or dead, by some divine agency, to heaven, or caught away in the arms of the river-god.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The Æneid has two drawbacks to its popularity as an epic poem amongst modern readers. One defect is common to all classical fiction—that there is no love-romance, properly so called, on the part either of the hero or of any other male character in the poem. Love, as now understood, has no place either in Virgil or Homer. We find in their verse none of those finer shades of feeling, that loyal personal allegiance, that high unselfish devotion, the mysterious sympathy, as untranslatable by anything but itself as the most perfect wording of the poet, which, nursed, it has been said, in the lap of Northern chivalry, but surely of much older birth, has given now for centuries to poet and to novelist their highest charm and inspiration. Poets had to sing as they could without it in Virgil's days. Augustus and Octavia, as they listened to the courtly *raconteur*, would have opened their eyes wide with astonishment if he had sung to them of the devotion of Lancelot, as surely as they would have laughed at the purity of Galahad. They understood what love was, in their fashion; many ladies of the

court sympathised with Dido, no doubt. They understood well enough "the fury of a woman scorned." They had seen a whole love-poem in real life, with the appropriate tragical *dénouement*, in Antony and Cleopatra. That was their notion of the grand passion. Probably the more shrewd among them looked upon Antony as a fool to prefer "love" to empire, and applauded Æneas's "piety" in obeying the oracles of the gods, when they pointed to a new wife whose dowry was a kingdom. There was quite love enough in the action of the poem to suit their tastes, and at anything better or purer they would have only shrugged their fair patrician shoulders.

But there is a more serious defect in the interest of the Æneid, when presented to English readers. It is, that Æneas is no hero. All the defences and apologies which have been made for him are perfectly just, and perfectly unnecessary. He was a hero quite good enough for the court of Augustus, and so far quite suitable for Virgil's purpose. Le Bossu was perfectly right when he contended that a hero, to be an object of legitimate interest, need not be a pattern of moral virtues. He might have gone further, and said that such paragons, who are plainly superior to the ordinary weaknesses of human nature, generally make very dull heroes indeed. Undoubtedly Æneas is a dutiful son, a respectable father, and, it may even be admitted, in spite of the unfortunate way in which he lost his wife, an exemplary husband. He spread his palms out to heaven in the most orthodox fashion on all occasions, and listened obediently to the message which the gods

were always sending him, to set up his home in Latium at all costs. All these estimable qualities are enough to furnish forth a dozen heroes. He is also ready to fight on all proper occasions; and as to the charge that he is equally ready to weep upon all occasions, which has been brought against him by one set of critics, and excused by others, both might have spared their pens; for it is a weakness which may be charged with equal truth upon most of the heroes, not only of classical fiction, but of classical history. It is not only that the chiefs of the Iliad weep without fearing any imputation against their manliness, but if we are to trust the unsensational chronicles of Cæsar, the whole rank and file of his army, even the veterans of the tenth legion—the "fighting division"—when first they heard that they were to be led against the tall and truculent-looking Germans, "could not restrain their tears," and set to work to make their wills forthwith. The thing is unaccountable, except from some strange difference of temperament; for who can imagine a company of our veriest raw ploughboy recruits so behaving themselves? They might shake in their very shoes; they might even very probably run away: but crying and howling is not our way of expressing emotion, after childhood is past. But we are accustomed to read of such exhibitions of feeling in the natives of warmer climates, as, for instance, in the characters of Scripture; and an occasional burst of tears on Æneas's part would not have unheroed him in our estimation one whit. It is his desertion of Dido which makes an irredeemable poltroon of him in

all honest English eyes. A woman and a queen receives the shipwrecked wanderer with a more than Oriental hospitality; loves him, "not wisely but too well"—and he deserts her. And then Mercury is made to remark, as a reason for Æneas getting away as quickly as possible, that "varium et mutabile semper *fœmina!*" —that the poor *lady's* mood was changeable, forsooth! The desertion is in obedience to the will of the gods, no doubt. That explanation satisfied the critics of Augustus's day, and he was to them, as Virgil calls him, the "pious" Æneas. To the modern reader, such an authorisation only makes the treachery more disgusting. The morality of English romance, ancient or modern, is by no means immaculate. Tristram and Iseult, still more Lancelot and Guinevere, are of very frail clay. The Sir Galahads ride alone; then, now, and always, in fiction as in fact. But a hero who could be false to a woman, and who was to find in that falsehood the turning-point to fame and success, —he might befit the loose tale with which the *rybauder* raised a laugh round the camp-fire, but he was the subject of no lay to which noble knight or dame would listen. The passion might be only *pars amours*, but it must be loyal. To keep such faith, once pledged, the hero might break all other laws, divine or human; but keep it he must. "*Loyaulté passe tout, et faulsseté honnet tout.*" The principle is by no means the highest, but it is incomparably higher than Virgil's. And this makes Lancelot, in spite of his great crime, a hero in one sense, even to the purest mind, while the calculating piety of Æneas is revolting.

The apologetic criticisms of some translators, who have felt themselves bound not only to give a faithful version of their author, but to defend his conception of a hero, are highly entertaining. Dryden, who was said by one of his malicious critics to have written "for the court ladies," admits candidly that he knows they "will make a numerous party against him," and that he "cannot much blame them, for, to say the truth, it is an ill precedent for their gallants to follow;" winding up with a satirical suggestion that they would do well at least "to learn experience at her cost." But in spite of this special pleading, even Dryden cannot conceal from himself that his hero makes but a very poor figure in this part of the story; nor can he resist the humorous remark that he was more afraid of Dido, after all, than of Jupiter. "For you may observe," says he, "that as much intent as he was upon his voyage, yet he still delayed it until the messenger was obliged to tell him plainly, that if he weighed not anchor in the night, the queen would be with him in the morning." Delille says that Æneas "triumphed over his passions in order to obey the will of heaven;" and forgets to add, that the triumph would have been more complete and more creditable if it had been achieved somewhat earlier in the story. He notices the unfortunate fate of poor Creusa,—left to follow as she might, and never missed till the more fortunate survivors met at the rendezvous,—only to say how necessary it was for the purposes of the story to dispose of her somehow, if there was a new wife awaiting Æneas in Italy; and how the account (his own ac-

count) of his affectionate search for her (with the usual tears) must have recommended him to Dido, and excused that poor lady for falling in love with him instantly! Rousseau has more truth in his epigram, —what could Dido expect better from a man who left his lawful wife to be burnt in Troy, and vowed he never missed her? Segrais, very like a Frenchman of the days of Louis XIV., thinks all would have been right if Æneas had but thrown a little more sentiment into the parting, and had bestowed upon Dido a few of those tears which were so ready upon less pathetic occasions.* As to the scene in the Shades, where the

* Dido has always been a favourite heroine with Frenchmen, and has been worked up into three or four tragedies. One writer, partly adopting M. Segrais's notion of how things ought to have been—that is to say, how a Frenchman would have behaved himself when such a parting was inevitable—has made Æneas take at least a civil farewell of the injured queen:—

> "Helas! si de mon sort j'avais ici mon choix,
> Bornant à vous aimer le bonheur de ma vie,
> Je tiendrais de vos mains un sceptre, une patrie:
> Les dieux m'ont envie le seul de leurs bienfaits,
> Qui pourait réparer tous les maux qu'ils m'ont faits."

And Dido, mollified by this declaration, far from cursing the fugitive lover in her last moments, assures him of her unchangeable affection, rather apologising for having so inconveniently fallen in his way, and delayed him so improperly from Lavinia and his kingdom:—

> "Et toi, d'ont j'ai troublée la haute destinée,
> Toi, qui ne m'entends plus—adieux, mon cher Ænée!
> Ne crains point ma colere—elle expire avec moi,
> Et mes derniers soupirs sont encore pour toi!" †

† Le Franc de Pompignan, "Didon."

false lover begins at last to make his tardy excuses and apologies, the French critic fairly throws up his brief for the defence, and contents himself with the suggestion that this was one of those passages in the poem with which Virgil himself was dissatisfied, and which he must certainly have intended to correct. But Æneas has, in fact, little personal character of any kind. He is only what Keble calls him, "a shadow with a mighty name;" and that writer even goes so far as to suggest, that in the curse imprecated upon him by Dido, and her treatment of him in the Shades, we may see an intimation that the poet intended the abasement of his hero.*

Turnus will always find more favour in the eyes of modern readers than his rival. Our English sympathies do not run at all with the foreign adventurer who comes between him and his promised bride, and who claims both the lady and the kingdom by virtue of a convenient oracle. Mr Gladstone's may perhaps be only an ingenious fancy, that Turnus was really the favourite with the poet himself; that although he made Æneas victorious, as was required, in order to carry out the complimentary reference of the Roman origin to Troy, still the young chief of native Italian blood, maintaining a gallant struggle for his rights against gods and men, and only conquered at the last by supernatural force and fraud, was purposely held out to popular admiration. But we must, at least, feel sympathy with him as utterly over-weighted in the final struggle by the superior strength and immortal

* Prælect., ii. 724.

arms of his adversary, and the flapping of the Fury's awful wings.

To trace the influence of the Æneid upon modern poetry would require a separate treatise. Spenser is full of Virgil. Tasso's great poem is in many passages the Æneid made Christian, with its heroes transplanted from the days of Troy to those of the Crusades. Dante borrows less from him, though with an intenser reverence he takes him for his "master" and his guide. In his mind, indeed, Virgil seems to have held a place midway, as it were, between the Pagan and the Christian life. If Beatrice represents, as has been said, the heavenly "Wisdom," Virgil is, in his allegory, the human intellect at its best and purest, which comes as near heaven as unassisted humanity may; for he is the guide who only quits the Christian poet when he is close to the gates of Paradise.

The "Sortes Virgilianæ" were long in use, often as a fashionable pastime, sometimes in graver earnest: the inquirer opened the volume at random, and took for the answer of fate the first few lines which caught his eye. In the times of the later Roman emperors, they ranked among the most popular, and perhaps the least objectionable, of the many superstitious practices which were then so prevalent. The Emperor Severus was said to have been encouraged in his boyhood by the very words which had such an effect on Octavia—"Thou shalt be our Marcellus!" And when subsequently he showed a taste rather for elegant accomplishments than for military renown, again the "Sortes," consulted for him by his

father, gave the well-known lines already quoted,* in which the glory of the Roman is pronounced to be that of the conqueror, not of the student or the artist. The superstition held its ground, through the middle ages, down to times very near our own. The story rests upon no mean authority, that Charles I. once tried the oracle with a startling result. He was in the Bodleian Library while the Court lay in Oxford, and was there shown a splendid edition of Virgil. Lord Falkland suggested to him sportively that he should try the "Sortes." The lines upon which the king opened are said to have been these, as they stand in Mr Conington's version :—

> "Scourged by a savage enemy,
> An exile from his son's embrace,
> So let him sue for aid, and see
> His people slain before his face :
> Or when to humbling peace at length
> He stoops, be his or life or land,
> But let him fall in manhood's strength,
> And welter tombless on the sand."

It was a gloomy oracle; and Falkland, anxious to remove the impression, tried his own fortune. He lighted on Evander's lament over his son Pallas :—

> "I knew the young blood's maddening play,
> The charm of battle's first essay;
> O valour blighted in the flower!
> O first mad drops of war's full shower!"

A few months afterwards Falkland fell at the battle of Newbury, barely thirty-four years old.

* P. 124.

There has always been a mystical school of classical interpretation, who see in the Æneid, as in the Iliad and Odyssey, a tissue of allegory from first to last. Not content with identifying the Trojan chief with Augustus, they found a double meaning in every character and every legend in the poem. Bishop Warburton, in his well-known 'Divine Legation,' expended a great amount of learning and research to prove that in the Descent to the Shades in the sixth book we have a sketch, scarcely veiled, of the great Eleusinian mysteries. Others saw in Dido the love-passion and the fate of Cleopatra, Antony in Turnus, the flight of Marius to the marshes in the person of Sinon, the miserable end of Pompey in Priam—

"The head shorn off, the trunk without a name."

It is impossible to enjoy either Homer or Virgil, if their text is to be "improved" at every step after this sort. Augustus and Octavia looked to the poet for a tale of the olden time, and he told it well. No doubt he threw in graceful compliments to Rome and its ruler; but to have to guess at some hidden meaning all along would have been far too severe a tax on the imperial audience, and would certainly not heighten the enjoyment of modern readers.

One would be glad to know what was the view that was really taken by that profligate court on the one hand, and by the poet himself on the other, of the theological machinery of the poem; those powerful and passionate Genii who pull the wires of the human puppets to gratify their own preferences and hatreds,

and are themselves the slaves of an awful Fate which overrides them all. Wherever Justice had fled from the earth, as the legend ran, in those pagan days, she had not found refuge in heaven. The human virtues which Virgil gives his heroes were no copies of anything celestial. Such lessons as the "gods" taught were chiefly perfidy and revenge. For men of intellect and of a pure life—and such is credibly said to have been Virgil's—the only salvation lay in utter unbelief of such a creed; or, at most, a stoical submission to that Unknown Fate which ruled all things human and divine. But even when the forms and creeds of religion had become a mockery, the rule of right, however warped, was recognised—in fiction, if not in fact: and Virgil, though for some reason he declined to paint the true hero at full length, has enabled us to pick out his component parts from his sketches of a dozen characters.

END OF VIRGIL.

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PREFACE.

No writer of antiquity has taken a stronger hold upon the modern mind than Horace. The causes of this are manifold, but three may be especially noted: his broad human sympathies, his vigorous common-sense, and his consummate mastery of expression. The mind must be either singularly barren or singularly cold to which Horace does not speak. The scholar, the statesman, the soldier, the man of the world, the town-bred man, the lover of the country, the thoughtful and the careless, he who reads much, and he who reads little, all find in his pages more or less to amuse their fancy, to touch their feelings, to quicken their observation, to nerve their convictions, to put into happy phrase the deductions of their experience. His poetical sentiment is not pitched in too high a key for the unimaginative, but it is always so genuine that the most imaginative feel its charm. His wisdom is deeper than it seems, so simple, practical, and direct as it is in its application; and his moral teaching more spiritual and penetrating than is apparent on a superficial study. He does not fall into the common error

of didactic writers, of laying upon life more than it will bear; but he insists that it shall at least bear the fruits of integrity, truth, honour, justice, self-denial, and brotherly charity. Over and above the mere literary charm of his works, too—and herein, perhaps, lies no small part of the secret of his popularity—the warm heart and thoroughly urbane nature of the man are felt instinctively by his readers, and draw them to him as to a friend.

Hence it is that we find he has been a manual with men the most diverse in their natures, culture, and pursuits. Dante ranks him next after Homer. Montaigne, as might be expected, knows him by heart. Fenelon and Bossuet never weary of quoting him. La Fontaine polishes his own exquisite style upon his model; and Voltaire calls him "the best of preachers." Hooker escapes with him to the fields to seek oblivion of a hard life, made harder by a shrewish spouse. Lord Chesterfield tells us, "When I talked my best I quoted Horace." To Boileau and to Wordsworth he is equally dear. Condorcet dies in his dungeon with Horace open by his side; and in Gibbon's militia days, "on every march," he says, "in every journey, Horace was always in my pocket, and often in my hand." And as it has been, so it is. In many a pocket, where this might be least expected, lies a well-thumbed Horace; and in many a devout Christian heart the maxims of the gentle, genial pagan find a place near the higher teachings of a greater master.

Where so much of a writer's charm lies, as with Horace, in exquisite aptness of language, and in a

style perfect for fulness of suggestion combined with brevity and grace, the task of indicating his characteristics in translation demands the most liberal allowance from the reader. In this volume the writer has gladly availed himself, where he might, of the privilege liberally accorded to him to use the admirable translations of the late Mr Conington, which are distinguished in all cases by the addition of his initial. The other translations are the writer's own. For these it would be superfluous to claim indulgence. This is sure to be granted by those who know their Horace well. With those who do not, these translations will not be wholly useless, if they serve to pique them into cultivating an acquaintance with the original sufficiently close to justify them in turning critics of their defects.

QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS.

BORN, A.U.C. 689, B.C. 65. DIED, A.U.C. 746, B.C. 8.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH.—EDUCATION.—CAMPAIGN WITH BRUTUS AND CASSIUS.

LIKE the two greatest lyrists of modern times, Burns and Béranger, Horace sprang from the ranks of the people. His father had been a slave, and he was himself cradled among "the huts where poor men lie." Like these great lyrists, too, Horace was proud of his origin. After he had become the intimate associate of the first men in Rome—nay, the bosom friend of the generals and statesmen who ruled the world—he was at pains on more occasions than one to call attention to the fact of his humble birth, and to let it be known that, had he to begin life anew, he was so far from desiring a better ancestry that he would, like Andrew Marvell, have made "his destiny his choice." Nor is this done with the pretentious affectation of the parvenu, eager to bring under notice the contrast between what he is and what he has been, and to insinuate his personal deserts, while pretending to disclaim them. Horace has no such false humility. He was proud, and he makes no secret that he was so, of the name he had made,—proud of it for himself and for the class

from which he had sprung. But it was his practice, as well as his settled creed, to rate at little the accidents of birth and fortune. A stronger and higher feeling, however, more probably dictated the avowal,—gratitude to that slave-born father whose character and careful training had stamped an abiding influence upon the life and genius of his son. Neither might he have been unwilling in this way quietly to protest against the worship of rank and wealth which he saw everywhere around him, and which was demoralising society in Rome. The favourite of the Emperor, the companion of Mæcenas, did not himself forget, neither would he let others forget, that he was a freedman's son; and in his own way was glad to declare, as Béranger did of himself at the height of his fame,

"Je suis vilain, et très vilain."

The Roman poets of the pre-Augustan and Augustan periods, unlike Horace, were all well born. Catullus and Calvus, his great predecessors in lyric poetry, were men of old and noble family Virgil, born five years before Horace, was the son of a Roman citizen of good property. Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, who were respectively six, fourteen, and twenty years his juniors, were all of equestrian rank. Horace's father was a freedman of the town of Venusia, the modern Venosa. It is supposed that he had been a *publicus servus*, or slave of the community, and took his distinctive name from the Horatian tribe, to which the community belonged. He had saved a moderate competency in the vocation of *coactor*, a name applied both to the collectors of public

revenue and of money at sales by public auction. To which of these classes he belonged is uncertain—most probably to the latter; and in those days of frequent confiscations, when property was constantly changing hands, the profits of his calling, at best a poor one, may have been unusually large. With the fruits of his industry he had purchased a small farm near Venusia, upon the banks of the Aufidus, the modern Ofanto, on the confines of Lucania and Apulia. Here, on the 8th of December, B.C. 65, the poet was born; and this picturesque region of mountain, forest, and river, "meet nurse of a poetic child," impressed itself indelibly on his memory, and imbued him with the love of nature, especially in her rugged aspect, which remained with him through life. He appears to have left the locality in early life, and never to have revisited it; but when he has occasion to describe its features (Odes, III. 4), he does this with a sharpness and truth of touch, which show how closely he had even then begun to observe. Acherontia, perched nest-like among the rocks, the Bantine thickets, the fat meadows of low-lying Forentum, which his boyish eye had noted, attest to this hour the vivid accuracy of his description. The passage in question records an interesting incident in the poet's childhood. Escaping from his nurse, he has rambled away from the little cottage on the slopes of Mount Vultur, whither he had probably been taken from the sultry Venusia to pass his *villeggiatura* during the heat of summer, and is found asleep, covered with fresh myrtle and laurel leaves, in which the wood-pigeons have swathed him.

"When from my nurse erewhile, on Vultur's steep,
I stray'd beyond the bound
Of our small homestead's ground,
Was I, fatigued with play, beneath a heap
Of fresh leaves sleeping found,—

"Strewn by the storied doves; and wonder fell
On all, their nest who keep
On Acherontia's steep,
Or in Forentum's low rich pastures dwell,
Or Bantine woodlands deep,

"That safe from bears and adders in such place
I lay, and slumbering smiled,
O'erstrewn with myrtle wild,
And laurel, by the god's peculiar grace
No craven-hearted child."

The incident thus recorded is not necessarily discredited by the circumstance of its being closely akin to what is told by Ælian of Pindar, that a swarm of bees settled upon his lips, and fed him with honey, when he was left exposed upon the highway. It probably had some foundation in fact, whatever may be thought of the implied augury of the special favour of the gods which is said to have been drawn from it at the time. In any case, the picture of the strayed child, sleeping unconscious of its danger, with its hands full of wild-flowers, is pleasant to contemplate.

In his father's house, and in those of the Apulian peasantry around him, Horace became familiar with the simple virtues of the poor, their industry and independence, their integrity, chastity, and self-denial, which he loved to contrast in after years with the

luxury and vice of imperial Rome. His mother he would seem to have lost early. No mention of her occurs, directly or indirectly, throughout his poems; and remarkable as Horace is for the warmth of his affections, this could scarcely have happened had she not died when he was very young. He appears also to have been an only child. This doubtless drew him closer to his father, and the want of the early influences of mother or sister may serve to explain why one misses in his poetry something of that gracious tenderness towards womanhood, which, looking to the sweet and loving disposition of the man, one might otherwise have expected to find in it. That he was no common boy we may be very sure, even if this were not manifest from the fact that his father resolved to give him a higher education than was to be obtained under a provincial schoolmaster. With this view, although little able to afford the expense, he took his son, when about twelve years old, to Rome, and gave him the best education the capital could supply. No money was spared to enable him to keep his position among his fellow-scholars of the higher ranks. He was waited on by several slaves, as though he were the heir to a considerable fortune. At the same time, however, he was not allowed either to feel any shame for his own order, or to aspire to a position which his patrimony was unable to maintain. His father taught him to look forward to some situation akin to that in which his own modest competency had been acquired; and to feel that, in any sphere, culture, self-respect, and prudent self-control must command influence, and

afford the best guarantee for happiness. In reading this part of Horace's story, as he tells it himself, one is reminded of Burns's early lines about his father and himself:—

"My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border,
And carefully he bred me up in decency and order.
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing,
For without an honest manly heart no man was worth regarding."

The parallel might be still further pursued. "My father," says Gilbert Burns, "was for some time almost the only companion we had. He conversed familiarly on all subjects with us as if we had been men, and was at great pains, while we accompanied him in the labours of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects as might tend to increase our knowledge, or confirm us in virtuous habits." How closely this resembles the method adopted with Horace by his father will be seen hereafter.*

Horace's literary master at Rome was Orbilius Pupillus, a grammarian, who had carried into his school his martinet habits as an old soldier; and who, thanks to Horace, has become a name (*plagosus Orbilius*, Orbilius of the birch) eagerly applied by many a suffering urchin to modern pedagogues who have resorted to the same material means of inculcating the

* Compare it, too, with what Horace reports of

"Ofellus the hind,
Though no scholar, a sage of exceptional kind,"

in the Second Satire of the Second Book, from line 114 to the end.

beauties of the classics. By this Busby of the period Horace was grounded in Greek, and made familiar, too familiar for his liking, with Ennius, Nævius, Pacuvius, Attius, Livius Andronicus, and other early Latin writers, whose unpruned vigour was distasteful to one who had already begun to appreciate the purer and not less vigorous style of Homer and other Greek authors. Horace's father took care that he should acquire all the accomplishments of a Roman gentleman, in which music and rhetoric were, as a matter of course, included. But, what was of still more importance during this critical period of the future poet's first introduction to the seductions of the capital, he enjoyed the advantages of his father's personal superintendence and of a careful moral training. His father went with him to all his classes, and, being himself a man of shrewd observation and natural humour, he gave the boy's studies a practical bearing by directing his attention to the follies and vices of the luxurious and dissolute society around him, showing him how incompatible they were with the dictates of reason and common-sense, and how disastrous in their consequences to the good name and happiness of those who yielded to their seductions. The method he pursued is thus described by Horace (Satires, I. 4) :—

"Should then my humorous vein run wild, some latitude allow.
I learned the habit from the best of fathers, who employed
Some living type to stamp the vice he wished me to avoid.
Thus temperate and frugal when exhorting me to be,
And with the competence content which he had stored for me,

'Look, boy!' he'd say, 'at Albius' son—observe his sorry plight!
And Barrus, that poor beggar there! Say, are not these a sight,
To warn a man from squandering his patrimonial means?'
When counselling me to keep from vile amours with common queans;
'Sectanus, ape him not!' he'd say; or, urging to forswear
Intrigue with matrons, when I might taste lawful joys elsewhere;
'Trebonius' fame is blurred since he was in the manner caught.
The reasons why this should be shunned, and why that should be sought,
The sages will explain; enough for me, if I uphold
The faith and morals handed down from our good sires of old,
And, while you need a guardian, keep your life pure and your name.
When years have hardened, as they will, your judgment and your frame,
You'll swim without a float!' And so, with talk like this, he won
And moulded me, while yet a boy. Was something to be done,
Hard it might be—'For this,' he'd say, 'good warrant you can quote'—
And then as model pointed to some public man of note.
Or was there something to be shunned, then he would urge, 'Can you
One moment doubt that acts like these are base and futile too,
Which have to him and him such dire disgrace and trouble bred?'
And as a neighbour's death appals the sick, and, by the dread

Of dying, forces them to put upon their lusts restraint,
So tender minds are oft deterred from vices by the taint
They see them bring on others' names; 'tis thus that I from those
Am all exempt, which bring with them a train of shames and woes."

Nor did Horace only inherit from his father, as he here says, the kindly humour and practical good sense which distinguish his satirical and didactic writings, and that manly independence which he preserved through the temptations of a difficult career. Many of "the rugged maxims hewn from life" with which his works abound are manifestly but echoes of what the poet had heard from his father's lips. Like his own Ofellus, and the elders of the race—not, let us hope, altogether bygone—of peasant-farmers in Scotland, described by Wordsworth as "Religious men, who give to God and men their dues,"—the Apulian freedman had a fund of homely wisdom at command, not gathered from books, but instinct with the freshness and force of direct observation and personal conviction. The following exquisite tribute by Horace to his worth is conclusive evidence how often and how deeply he had occasion to be grateful, not only for the affectionate care of this admirable father, but also for the bias and strength which that father's character had given to his own. It has a further interest, as occurring in a poem addressed to Mæcenas, a man of ancient family and vast wealth, in the early days of that acquaintance with the poet which was afterwards to ripen into a lifelong friendship.

"Yet if some trivial faults, and these but few,
My nature, else not much amiss, imbue
(Just as you wish away, yet scarcely blame,
A mole or two upon a comely frame),
If no man may arraign me of the vice
Of lewdness, meanness, nor of avarice;
If pure and innocent I live, and dear
To those I love (self-praise is venial here),
All this I owe my father, who, though poor,
Lord of some few lean acres, and no more,
Was loath to send me to the village school,
Whereto the sons of men of mark and rule,—
Centurions, and the like,—were wont to swarm,
With slate and satchel on sinister arm,
And the poor dole of scanty pence to pay
The starveling teacher on the quarter-day;
But boldly took me, when a boy, to Rome,
There to be taught all arts that grace the home
Of knight and senator. To see my dress,
And slaves attending, you'd have thought, no less
Than patrimonial fortunes old and great
Had furnished forth the charges of my state.
When with my tutors, he would still be by,
Nor ever let me wander from his eye;
And, in a word, he kept me chaste (and this
Is virtue's crown) from all that was amiss,
Nor such in act alone, but in repute,
Till even scandal's tattling voice was mute.
No dread had he that men might taunt or jeer,
Should I, some future day, as auctioneer,
Or, like himself, as tax-collector, seek
With petty fees my humble means to eke.
Nor should I then have murmured. Now I know,
More earnest thanks, and loftier praise I owe.
Reason must fail me, ere I cease to own
With pride, that I have such a father known;

Nor shall I stoop my birth to vindicate,
By charging, like the herd, the wrong on Fate,
That I was not of noble lineage sprung:
Far other creed inspires my heart and tongue.
For now should Nature bid all living men
Retrace their years, and live them o'er again,
Each culling, as his inclination bent,
His parents for himself, with mine content,
I would not choose whom men endow as great
With the insignia and seats of state;
And, though I seemed insane to vulgar eyes,
Thou wouldst perchance esteem me truly wise,
In thus refusing to assume the care
Of irksome state I was unused to bear."

The education, of which Horace's father had laid the foundation at Rome, would not have been complete without a course of study at Athens, then the capital of literature and philosophy, as Rome was of political power. Thither Horace went somewhere between the age of 17 and 20. "At Rome," he says (Epistles, II. ii. 23),

"I had my schooling, and was taught
Achilles' wrath, and all the woes it brought;
At classic Athens, where I went ere long,
I learned to draw the line 'twixt right and wrong,
And search for truth, if so she might be seen,
In Academic groves of blissful green." (C.)

At Athens he found many young men of the leading Roman families—Bibulus, Messalla, Corvinus, the younger Cicero, and others—engaged in the same pursuits with himself, and he contracted among them many enduring friendships. In the political lull which ensued between the battle of Pharsalia (B.C.

48) and the death of Julius Cæsar (B.C. 44), he was enabled to devote himself without interruption to the studies which had drawn him to that home of literature and the arts. But these were destined before long to be rudely broken. The tidings of that startling event had been hailed with delight by the youthful spirits, some of whom saw in the downfall of the great Dictator the dawn of a new era of liberty, while others hoped from it the return to power of the aristocratic party to which they belonged. In this mood Brutus found them when he arrived in Athens along with Cassius, on their way to take command of the Eastern provinces which had been assigned to them by the Senate. Cassius hurried on to his post in Syria, but Brutus lingered behind, ostensibly absorbed in the philosophical studies of the schools, but at the same time recruiting a staff of officers for his army from among the young Romans of wealth and family whom it was important he should attach to his party, and who were all eagerness to make his cause their own. Horace, infected by the general enthusiasm, joined his standard; and, though then only twenty-two, without experience, and with no special aptitude, physical or mental, for a military life, he was intrusted by Brutus with the command of a legion. There is no reason to suppose that he owed a command of such importance to any dearth of men of good family qualified to act as officers. It is, therefore, only reasonable to conclude, that even at this early period he was recognised in the brilliant society around him as a man of mark; and that Brutus, before

selecting him, had thoroughly satisfied himself that he possessed qualities which justified so great a deviation from ordinary rules, as the commission of so responsible a charge to a freedman's son. That Horace gave his commander satisfaction we know from himself. The line (Epistles, I. xx. 23), "*Me primis urbis belli placuisse domique*,"—

> "At home, as in the field, I made my way,
> And kept it, with the first men of the day,"—

can be read in no other sense. But while Horace had, beyond all doubt, made himself a strong party of friends who could appreciate his genius and attractive qualities, his appointment as military tribune excited jealousy among some of his brother officers, who considered that the command of a Roman legion should have been reserved for men of nobler blood — a jealousy at which he said, with his usual modesty, many years afterwards (Satires, I. vi. 45), he had no reason either to be surprised or to complain.

In B.C. 43, Brutus, with his army, passed from Macedonia to join Cassius in Asia Minor, and Horace took his part in their subsequent active and brilliant campaign there. Of this we get some slight incidental glimpses in his works. Thus, for example (Odes, II. 7), we find him reminding his comrade, Pompeius Varus, how

> "Full oft they sped the lingering day
> Quaffing bright wine, as in our tents we lay,
> With Syrian spikenard on our glistening hair."

The Syrian spikenard, *Malobathrum Syrium*, fixes the locality. Again, in the epistle to his friend Bullatius (Epistles, I. 11), who is making a tour in Asia, Horace speaks of several places as if from vivid recollection. In his usual dramatic manner, he makes Bullatius answer his inquiries as to how he likes the places he has seen :—

> "*You know what Lebedos is like;* so bare,
> With Gabii or Fidenæ 'twould compare;
> Yet there, methinks, I would accept my lot,
> My friends forgetting, by my friends forgot,
> Stand on the cliff at distance, and survey
> The stormy sea-god's wild Titanic play." (C.)

Horace himself had manifestly watched the angry surges from the cliffs of Lebedos. But a more interesting record of the Asiatic campaign, inasmuch as it is probably the earliest specimen of Horace's writing which we have, occurs in the Seventh Satire of the First Book. Persius, a rich trader of Clazomene, has a lawsuit with Rupilius, one of Brutus's officers, who went by the nickname of "King." Brutus, in his character of quæstor, has to decide the dispute, which in the hands of the principals degenerates, as disputes so conducted generally do, into a personal squabble. Persius leads off with some oriental flattery of the general and his suite. Brutus is "Asia's sun," and they the "propitious stars," all but Rupilius, who was

> "That pest,
> The Dog, whom husbandmen detest."

Rupilius, an old hand at slang, replies with a volley of rough sarcasms, "such as among the vineyards fly," and

> "Would make the passer-by
> Shout filthy names, but shouting fly"—

a description of vintage slang which is as true to-day as it was then. The conclusion is curious, as a punning allusion to the hereditary fame of Brutus as a puller-down of kings, which it must have required some courage to publish, when Augustus was omnipotent in Rome.

> "But Grecian Persius, after he
> Had been besprinkled plenteously
> With gall Italic, cries, 'By all
> The gods above, on thee I call,
> Oh Brutus, thou of old renown,
> For putting kings completely down,
> To save us! Wherefore do you not
> Despatch this King here on the spot?
> One of the tasks is this, believe,
> Which you are destined to achieve!'"

This is just such a squib as a young fellow might be expected to dash off for the amusement of his brother officers, while the incident which led to it was yet fresh in their minds. Slight as it is, one feels sure its preservation by so severe a critic of his own writings as Horace was due to some charm of association, or possibly to the fact that in it he had made his first essay in satire.

The defeat of Brutus at Philippi (B.C. 42) brought Horace's military career to a close. Even before this

decisive event, his dream of the re-establishment of liberty and the old Roman constitution had probably begun to fade away, under his actual experience of the true aims and motives of the mass of those whom Brutus and Cassius had hitherto been leading to victory, and satiating with plunder. Young aristocrats, who sneered at the freedman's son, were not likely to found any system of liberty worthy of the name, or to use success for nobler purposes than those of selfish ambition. Fighting was not Horace's vocation, and with the death of Brutus and those nobler spirits, who fell at Philippi rather than survive their hopes of freedom, his motive for fighting was at an end. To prolong a contest which its leaders had surrendered in despair was hopeless. He did not, therefore, like Pompeius Varus and others of his friends, join the party which, for a time, protracted the struggle under the younger Pompey. But, like his great leader, he had fought for a principle; nor could he have regarded otherwise than with horror the men who had overthrown Brutus, reeking as they were with the blood of a thousand proscriptions, and reckless as they had shown themselves of every civil right and social obligation. As little, therefore, was he inclined to follow the example of others of his distinguished friends and companions in arms, such as Valerius Messalla and Ælius Lamia, who not merely made their peace with Antony and Octavius, but cemented it by taking service in their army.

CHAPTER II.

RETURNS TO ROME AFTER BATTLE OF PHILIPPI.—
EARLY POEMS.

Availing himself of the amnesty proclaimed by the conquerors, Horace found his way back to Rome. His father was dead; how long before is not known. If the little property at Venusia had remained unsold, it was of course confiscated. When the lands of men, like Virgil, who had taken no active part in the political conflicts of the day, were being seized to satisfy the rapacity of a mercenary soldiery, Horace's paternal acres were not likely to escape. In Rome he found himself penniless. How to live was the question; and, fortunately for literature, "chill penury" did not repress, but, on the contrary, stimulated his "noble rage."

> "Bated in spirit, and with pinions clipped,
> Of all the means my father left me stripped,
> Want stared me in the face, so then and there
> I took to scribbling verse in sheer despair."

Despoiled of his means, and smarting with defeat, Horace was just in the state of mind to strike vigor-

ously at men and manners which he did not like. Young, ardent, constitutionally hot in temper, eager to assert, amid the general chaos of morals public and private, the higher principles of the philosophic schools from which he had so recently come, irritated by the thousand mortifications to which a man of cultivated tastes and keenly alive to beauty is exposed in a luxurious city, where the prizes he values most are carried off, yet scarcely valued, by the wealthy vulgar, he was especially open to the besetting temptation of clever young men to write satire, and to write it in a merciless spirit. As he says of himself (Odes, I. 15),

> "In youth's pleasant spring-time,
> The shafts of my passion at random I flung,
> And, dashing headlong into petulant rhyme,
> I recked neither where nor how fiercely I stung."

Youth is always intolerant, and it is so easy to be severe; so seductive to say brilliant things, whether they be true or not. But there came a day, and it came soon, when Horace saw that triumphs gained in this way were of little value, and when he was anxious that his friends should join with him in consigning his smart and scurril lines (*celeres et criminosos Iambos*) to oblivion. The *amende* for some early lampoon which he makes in the Ode just quoted, though ostensibly addressed to a lady who had been its victim, was probably intended to cover a wider field.

Personal satire is always popular, but the fame it begets is bought dearly at the cost of lifelong enmities and many after-regrets. That Horace in his early

writings was personal and abusive is very clear, both from his own language and from a few of the poems of this class and period which survive. Some of these have no value, except as showing how badly even Horace could write, and how sedulously the better feeling and better taste of his riper years led him to avoid that most worthless form of satire which attacks where rejoinder is impossible, and irritates the temper but cannot possibly amend the heart. In others, the lash is applied with no less justice than vigour, as in the following invective, the fourth of the Epodes:—

"Such hate as nature meant to be
'Twixt lamb and wolf I feel for thee,
Whose hide by Spanish scourge is tanned,
And legs still bear the fetter's brand!
Though of your gold you strut so vain,
Wealth cannot change the knave in grain.
How! see you not, when striding down
The Via Sacra* in your gown
Good six ells wide, the passers there
Turn on you with indignant stare?
'This wretch,' such gibes your ear invade,
'By the Triumvirs'† scourges flayed,
Till even the crier shirked his toil,
Some thousand acres ploughs of soil
Falernian, and with his nags
Wears out the Appian highway's flags;
Nay, on the foremost seats, despite
Of Otho, sits and apes the knight.

* The Sacred Way, leading to the Capitol, a favourite lounge.

† When a slave was being scourged, under the orders of the Triumviri Capitales, a public crier stood by, and proclaimed the nature of his crime.

What boots it to despatch a fleet
So large, so heavy, so complete,
Against a gang of rascal knaves,
Thieves, corsairs, buccaneers, and slaves,
If villain of such vulgar breed
Is in the foremost rank to lead?'"

Modern critics may differ as to whom this bitter invective was aimed at, but there could have been no doubt on that subject in Rome at the time. And if, as there is every reason to conclude, it was levelled at Sextus Menas, the lines, when first shown about among Horace's friends, must have told with great effect, and they were likely to be remembered long after the infamous career of this double-dyed traitor had come to a close. Menas was a freedman of Pompey the Great, and a trusted officer of his son Sextus.* He had recently (B.C. 38) carried over with him to Augustus a portion of Pompey's fleet which was under his command, and betrayed into his hands the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. For this act of treachery he was loaded with wealth and honours; and when Augustus, next year, fitted out a naval expedition against Sextus Pompeius, Menas received a command. It was probably lucky for Horace that this swaggering upstart, who was not likely to be scrupulous as to his means of revenge, went over the very next year to his former master, whom he again abandoned within a year to sell himself once more

* Shakespeare has introduced him in "Antony and Cleopatra," along with Menecrates and Varrius, as "friends to Sextus Pompeius."

to Augustus. That astute politician put it out of his power to play further tricks with the fleet, by giving him a command in Pannonia, where he was killed, B.C. 36, at the siege of Siscia, the modern Sissek.

Though Horace was probably best known in Rome in these early days as a writer of lampoons and satirical poems, in which the bitterness of his models Archilochus and Lucilius was aimed at, not very successfully—for bitterness and personal rancour were not natural to the man—he showed in other compositions signs of the true poetic spirit, which afterwards found expression in the consummate grace and finish of his Odes. To this class belongs the following poem (Epode 16), which, from internal evidence, appears to have been written B.C. 40, when the state of Italy, convulsed by civil war, was well calculated to fill him with despair. Horace had frequent occasion between this period and the battle of Actium, when the defeat and death of Antony closed the long struggle for supremacy between him and Octavius, to appeal to his countrymen against the waste of the best blood of Italy in civil fray, which might have been better spent in subduing a foreign foe, and spreading the lustre of the Roman arms. But if we are to suppose this poem written when the tidings of the bloody incidents of the Perusian campaign had arrived in Rome,—the reduction of the town of Perusia by famine, and the massacre of from two to three hundred prisoners, almost all of equestrian or senatorial rank,—we can well understand the feeling under which the poem is written.

To the Roman People.

Another age in civil wars will soon be spent and worn,
And by her native strength our Rome be wrecked and overborne,
That Rome, the Marsians could not crush, who border on our lands,
Nor the shock of threatening Porsena with his Etruscan bands,
Nor Capua's strength that rivalled ours, nor Spartacus the stern,
Nor the faithless Allobrogian, who still for change doth yearn.
Ay, what Germania's blue-eyed youth quelled not with ruthless sword,
Nor Hannibal by our great sires detested and abhorred,
We shall destroy with impious hands imbrued in brother's gore,
And wild beasts of the wood shall range our native land once more.
A foreign foe, alas! shall tread The City's ashes down,
And his horse's ringing hoofs shall smite her places of renown,
And the bones of great Quirinus, now religiously enshrined,
Shall be flung by sacrilegious hands to the sunshine and the wind.
And if ye all from ills so dire ask how yourselves to free,
Or such at least as would not hold your lives unworthily,
No better counsel can I urge, than that which erst inspired
The stout Phocæans when from their doomed city they retired,
Their fields, their household gods, their shrines surrendering as a prey
To the wild boar and the ravening wolf; * so we, in our dismay,

* The story of the Phocæans is told by Herodotus (Ch. 165).

Where'er our wandering steps may chance to carry us should go,
Or wheresoe'er across the seas the fitful winds may blow.
How think ye then? If better course none offer, why should we
Not seize the happy auspices, and boldly put to sea?
But let us swear this oath;—"Whene'er, if e'er shall come the time,
Rocks upwards from the deep shall float, return shall not be crime;
Nor we be loath to back our sails, the ports of home to seek,
When the waters of the Po shall lave Matinum's rifted peak.
Or skyey Apenninus down into the sea be rolled,
Or wild unnatural desires such monstrous revel hold,
That in the stag's endearments the tigress shall delight,
And the turtle-dove adulterate with the falcon and the kite,
That unsuspicious herds no more shall tawny lions fear,
And the he-goat, smoothly sleek of skin, through the briny deep career!"
This having sworn, and what beside may our returning stay,
Straight let us all, this City's doomed inhabitants, away,
Or those that rise above the herd, the few of nobler soul;
The craven and the hopeless here on their ill-starred beds may loll.
Ye who can feel and act like men, this woman's wail give o'er,
And fly to regions far away beyond the Etruscan shore!

When their city was attacked by Harpagus, they retired in a body to make way for the Persians, who took possession of it. They subsequently returned, and put to the sword the Persian garrison which had been left in it by Harpagus. "Afterwards, when this was accomplished, they pronounced terrible imprecations on any who should desert the fleet; besides this, they sunk a mass of molten iron, and swore that they would never return to Phocæa until it should appear again."

The circling ocean waits us; then away, where nature smiles,
To those fair lands, those blissful lands, the rich and happy Isles!
Where Ceres year by year crowns all the untilled land with sheaves,
And the vine with purple clusters droops, unpruned of all her leaves;
Where the olive buds and burgeons, to its promise ne'er untrue,
And the russet fig adorns the tree, that graffshoot never knew;
Where honey from the hollow oaks doth ooze, and crystal rills
Come dancing down with tinkling feet from the sky-dividing hills;
There to the pails the she-goats come, without a master's word,
And home with udders brimming broad returns the friendly herd.
There round the fold no surly bear its midnight prowl doth make,
Nor teems the rank and heaving soil with the adder and the snake;
There no contagion smites the flocks, nor blight of any star
With fury of remorseless heat the sweltering herds doth mar.
Nor this the only bliss that waits us there, where drenching rains
By watery Eurus swept along ne'er devastate the plains,
Nor are the swelling seeds burnt up within the thirsty clods,
So kindly blends the seasons there the King of all the Gods.
That shore the Argonautic bark's stout rowers never gained,
Nor the wily she of Colchis with step unchaste profaned;
The sails of Sidon's galleys ne'er were wafted to that strand,
Nor ever rested on its slopes Ulysses' toilworn band:

For Jupiter, when he with brass the Golden Age alloyed,
That blissful region set apart by the good to be enjoyed;
With brass and then with iron he the ages seared, but ye,
Good men and true, to that bright home arise and follow me!

This poem, Lord Lytton has truly said, "has the character of youth in its defects and its beauties. The redundance of its descriptive passages is in marked contrast to the terseness of description which Horace studies in his Odes; and there is something declamatory in its general tone which is at variance with the simpler utterance of lyrical art. On the other hand, it has all the warmth of genuine passion, and in sheer vigour of composition Horace has rarely excelled it."

The idea of the Happy Isles, referred to in the poem, was a familiar one with the Greek poets. They became in time confounded with the Elysian fields, in which the spirits of the departed good and great enjoyed perpetual rest. It is as such that Ulysses mentions them in Tennyson's noble monologue :—

> "It may be that the gulfs shall wash us down,
> It may be we shall reach the Happy Isles,
> And see the great Achilles, whom we knew."

These islands were supposed to be in the far west, and were probably the poetical amplification of some voyager's account of the Canaries or of Madeira. There has always been a region beyond the boundaries of civilisation to which the poet's fancy has turned for ideal happiness and peace. The difference between

ancient and modern is, that material comforts, as in this epode, enter largely into the dream of the ancient, while independence, beauty, and grandeur are the chief elements in the modern picture :—

"Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadth of Tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.
Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, droops the trailer from the crag ;
Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree,
Summer Isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea."

To the same class of Horace's early poems, though probably a few years later in date, belongs the following eulogium of a country life and its innocent enjoyments (Epode 2), the leading idea of which was embodied by Pope in the familiar lines, wonderful for finish as the production of a boy of eleven, beginning

"Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound."

With characteristic irony Horace puts his fancies into the mouth of Alphius, a miserly money-lender. No one yearns so keenly for the country and its imagined peace as the overworked city man, when his pulse is low and his spirits weary with bad air and the reaction of over-excitement ; no one, as a rule, is more apt to tire of the homely and uneventful life which the country offers, or to find that, for him at least, its quietude

does not bring peace. It is not, therefore, at all out of keeping, although critics have taken exception to the poem on this ground, that Horace makes Alphius rhapsodise on the charms of a rural life, and having tried them, creep back within the year to his money-bags and his ten per cent. It was, besides, a favourite doctrine with him, which he is constantly enforcing in his later works, that everybody envies his neighbour's pursuits—until he tries them.

ALPHIUS.

Happy the man, in busy schemes unskilled,
Who, living simply, like our sires of old,
Tills the few acres, which his father tilled,
Vexed by no thoughts of usury or gold;

The shrilling clarion ne'er his slumber mars,
Nor quails he at the howl of angry seas;
He shuns the forum, with its wordy jars,
Nor at a great man's door consents to freeze.

The tender vine-shoots, budding into life,
He with the stately poplar-tree doth wed,
Lopping the fruitless branches with his knife,
And grafting shoots of promise in their stead;

Or in some valley, up among the hills,
Watches his wandering herds of lowing kine,
Or fragrant jars with liquid honey fills,
Or shears his silly sheep in sunny shine;

Or when Autumnus o'er the smiling land
Lifts up his head with rosy apples crowned,
Joyful he plucks the pears, which erst his hand
Graffed on the stem they're weighing to the ground;

Plucks grapes in noble clusters purple-dyed,
A gift for thee, Priapus, and for thee,
Father Sylvanus, where thou dost preside,
Warding his bounds beneath thy sacred tree.

Now he may stretch his careless limbs to rest,
Where some old ilex spreads its sacred roof;
Now in the sunshine lie, as likes him best,
On grassy turf of close elastic woof.

And streams the while glide on with murmurs low,
And birds are singing 'mong the thickets deep,
And fountains babble, sparkling as they flow,
And with their noise invite to gentle sleep.

But when grim winter comes, and o'er his grounds
Scatters its biting snows with angry roar,
He takes the field, and with a cry of hounds
Hunts down into the toils the foaming boar;

Or seeks the thrush, poor starveling, to ensnare,
In filmy net with bait delusive stored,
Entraps the travelled crane, and timorous hare,
Rare dainties these to glad his frugal board.

Who amid joys like these would not forget
The pangs which love to all its victims bears,
The fever of the brain, the ceaseless fret,
And all the heart's lamentings and despairs?

But if a chaste and blooming wife, beside,
The cheerful home with sweet young blossoms fills,
Like some stout Sabine, or the sunburnt bride
Of the lithe peasant of the Apulian hills,

Who piles the hearth with logs well dried and old
Against the coming of her wearied lord,
And, when at eve the cattle seek the fold,
Drains their full udders of the milky hoard;

And bringing forth from her well-tended store
A jar of wine, the vintage of the year,
Spreads an unpurchased feast,—oh then, not more
Could choicest Lucrine oysters give me cheer,

Or the rich turbot, or the dainty char,
If ever to our bays the winter's blast
Should drive them in its fury from afar;
Nor were to me a welcomer repast

The Afric hen or the Ionic snipe,
Than olives newly gathered from the tree,
That hangs abroad its clusters rich and ripe,
Or sorrel, that doth love the pleasant lea,

Or mallows wholesome for the body's need,
Or lamb foredoomed upon some festal day
In offering to the guardian gods to bleed,
Or kidling which the wolf hath marked for prey.

What joy, amidst such feasts, to see the sheep,
Full of the pasture, hurrying homewards come;
To see the wearied oxen, as they creep,
Dragging the upturned ploughshare slowly home!

Or, ranged around the bright and blazing hearth,
To see the hinds, a house's surest wealth,
Beguile the evening with their simple mirth,
And all the cheerfulness of rosy health!

Thus spake the miser Alphius; and, bent
Upon a country life, called in amain
The money he at usury had lent;—
But ere the month was out, 'twas lent again.

In this charming sketch of the peasant's life it is easy to see that Horace is drawing from nature, like Burns in his more elaborate picture of the "Cottar's

Saturday Night." Horace had obviously watched closely the ways of the peasantry round his Apulian home, as he did at a later date those of the Sabine country, and to this we owe many of the most delightful passages in his works. He omits no opportunity of contrasting their purity of morals, and the austere self-denial of their life, with the luxurious habits and reckless vice of the city life of Rome. Thus, in one of the finest of his Odes (Book III. 6), after painting with a few masterly strokes what the matrons and the fast young ladies of the imperial city had become, it was not from such as these, he continues, that the noble youth sprang "who dyed the seas with Carthaginian gore, overthrew Pyrrhus and great Antiochus and direful Hannibal," concluding in words which contrast by their suggestive terseness at the same time that they suggest comparison with the elaborated fulness of the epode just quoted :—

"But they, of rustic warriors wight
The manly offspring, learned to smite
The soil with Sabine spade,
And faggots they had cut, to bear
Home from the forest, whensoe'er
An austere mother bade ;

"What time the sun began to change
The shadows through the mountain range,
And took the yoke away
From the o'erwearied oxen, and
His parting car proclaimed at hand
The kindliest hour of day."

Another of Horace's juvenile poems, unique in subject and in treatment (Epode 5), gives evidence of a

picturesque power of the highest kind, stimulating the imagination, and swaying it with the feelings of pity and terror in a way to make us regret that he wrote no others in a similar vein. We find ourselves at midnight in the gardens of the sorceress Canidia, whither a boy of good family—his rank being clearly indicated by the reference to his purple *toga* and *bulla*—has been carried off from his home. His terrified exclamations, with which the poem opens, as Canidia and her three assistants surround him, glaring on him, with looks significant of their deadly purpose, through lurid flames fed with the usual ghastly ingredients of a witch's fire, carry us at once into the horrors of the scene. While one of the hags sprinkles her hell-drops through the adjoining house, another is casting up earth from a pit, in which the boy is presently imbedded to the chin, and killed by a frightful process of slow torture, in order that a love philtre of irresistible power may be concocted from his liver and spleen. The time, the place, the actors are brought before us with singular dramatic power. Canidia's burst of wonder and rage that the spells she deemed all-powerful have been counteracted by some sorceress of skill superior to her own, gives great reality to the scene ; and the curses of the dying boy, launched with tragic vigour, and closing with a touch of beautiful pathos, bring it to an effective close.

The speculations as to who and what Canidia was, in which scholars have run riot, are conspicuous for absurdity, even among the wild and ridiculous conjectures as to the personages named by Horace in which the commentators have indulged. That some well-

known person was the original of Canidia is extremely probable, for professors of witchcraft abounded at the time, combining very frequently, like their modern successors, the arts of Medea with the attributes of Dame Quickly. What more natural than for a young poet to work up an effective picture out of the abundant suggestions which the current stories of such creatures and their doings presented to his hand? The popular belief in their power, the picturesque conditions under which their spells were wrought, the wild passions in which lay the secret of their hold upon the credulity of their victims, offered to the Roman poet, just as they did to our own Elizabethan dramatists, a combination of materials most favourable for poetic treatment. But that Horace had, as many of his critics contend, a feeling of personal vanity, the pique of a discarded lover, to avenge, is an assumption wholly without warrant. He was the last man, at any time or under any circumstances, to have had any relations of a personal nature with a woman of Canidia's class. However inclined he may have been to use her and her practices for poetic purposes, he manifestly not only saw through the absurdity of her pretensions, but laughed at her miserable impotence, and meant that others should do the same. It seems to be impossible to read the 8th of his First Book of his Satires, and not come to this conclusion. That satire consists of the monologue of a garden god, set up in the garden which Mæcenas had begun to lay out on the Esquiline Hill. This spot had until recently been the burial-ground of the Roman poor, a quarter noisome by day, and the

haunt of thieves and beasts of prey by night. On this obscene spot, littered with skulls and dead men's bones, Canidia and her accomplice Sagana are again introduced, digging a pit with their nails, into which they pour the blood of a coal-black ewe, which they had previously torn limb-meal,

> "So to evoke the shade and soul
> Of dead men, and from these to wring
> Responses to their questioning."

They have with them two effigies, one of wax and the other of wool—the latter the larger of the two, and overbearing the other, which cowers before it,

> "Like one that stands
> Beseeching in the hangman's hands.
> On Hecate one, Tisiphone
> The other calls; and you might see
> Serpents and hell-hounds thread the dark,
> Whilst, these vile orgies not to mark,
> The moon, all bloody red of hue,
> Behind the massive tombs withdrew."

The hags pursue their incantations; higher and higher flames their ghastly fire, and the grizzled wolves and spotted snakes slink in terror to their holes, as the shrieks and muttered spells of the beldams make the moon-forsaken night more hideous. But after piling up his horrors with the most elaborate skill, as if in the view of some terrible climax, the poet makes them collapse into utter farce. Disgusted by their intrusion on his privacy, the Priapus adopts a simple but exceedingly vulgar expedient to alarm these appalling hags. In an instant they fall into the most abject

terror, suspend their incantations, and, tucking up their skirts, make off for the more comfortable quarters of the city as fast as their trembling limbs can carry them—Canidia, the great enchantress, dropping her false teeth, and her attendant Sagana parting company with her wig, by the way :—

> "While you
> With laughter long and loud might view
> Their herbs, and charmed adders wound
> In mystic coils, bestrew the ground."

And yet grave scholars gravely ask us to believe that Canidia was an old mistress of the poet's! These poems evidently made a success, and Horace returned to the theme in his 17th Epode. Here he writes as though he had been put under a spell by Canidia, in revenge for his former calumnies about her.

> "My youth has fled, my rosy hue
> Turned to a wan and livid blue ;
> Blanched by thy mixtures is my hair ;
> No respite have I from despair.
> The days and nights, they wax and wane,
> Yet bring me no release from pain ;
> Nor can I ease, howe'er I gasp,
> The spasm, which holds me in its grasp."

Here we have all the well-known symptoms of a man under a malign magical influence. In this extremity Horace affects to recant all the mischief he has formerly spoken of the enchantress. Let her name what penance he will, he is ready to perform it. If a hundred steers will appease her wrath, they are hers ; or if she prefers to be sung of as the chaste and good, and

to range above the spheres as a golden star, his lyre is at her service. Her parentage is as unexceptionable as her life is pure, but while ostentatiously disclaiming his libels, the poet takes care to insinuate them anew, by apostrophising her in conclusion, thus :–

> "Thou who dost ne'er in haglike wont
> Among the tombs of paupers hunt
> For ashes newly laid in ground,
> Love-charms and philtres to compound,
> Thy heart is gentle, pure thy hands."

Of course, Canidia is not mollified by such a recantation as this. The man who,

> "Branding her name with ill renown,
> Made her the talk of all the town,"

is not so lightly to be forgiven.

> "You'd have a speedy doom? But no,
> It shall be lingering, sharp, and slow."

The pangs of Tantalus, of Prometheus, or of Sisyphus, are but the types of what his shall be. Let him try to hang, drown, stab himself—his efforts will be vain :—

> "Then comes my hour of triumph, then
> I'll goad you till you writhe again ;
> Then shall you curse the evil hour
> You made a mockery of my power."

She then triumphantly reasserts the powers to which she lays claim. What! I, she exclaims, who can waste life as the waxen image of my victim melts before my magic fire*—I, who can bring down the moon from her

* Thus Hecate in Middleton's "Witch" assures to the Duchess of Glo'ster "a sudden and subtle death" to her victim :—

sphere, evoke the dead from their ashes, and turn the affections by my philtres,—

> "Shall I my potent art bemoan
> As impotent 'gainst thee alone?"

Surely all this is as purely the work of imagination as Middleton's "Witch," or the Hags in "Macbeth," or in Goethe's 'Faust.' Horace used Canidia as a byword for all that was hateful in the creatures of her craft, filthy as they were in their lives and odious in their persons. His literary and other friends were as familiar with her name in this sense as we are with those of Squeers and Micawber, as types of a class; and the joke was well understood when, many years after, in the 8th of his Second Book of Satires, he said that Nasidienus's dinner-party broke up without their eating a morsel of the dishes after a certain point, —"As if a pestilential blast from Canidia's throat, more venomous than that of African vipers, had swept across them."

> "His picture made in wax, and gently molten
> By a blue fire, kindled with dead men's eyes,
> Will waste him by degrees."—

An old delusion. We find it in Theocritus, where a girl, forsaken by her lover, resorts to the same desperate restorative (Idylls ii. 28)—

> "As this image of wax I melt here by aidance demonic,
> Myndian Delphis shall so melt with love's passion anon."

Again Ovid (Heroides vi. 91) makes Hypsipyle say of Medea:

> "The absent she binds with her spells, and figures of wax she devises,
> And in their agonised spleen fine-pointed needles she thrusts."

CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCTION TO MÆCENAS.—THE JOURNEY TO BRUNDUSIUM.

HORACE had not been long in Rome, after his return from Greece, before he had made himself a name. With what he got from the booksellers, or possibly by the help of friends, he had purchased a patent place in the Quæstor's department, a sort of clerkship of the Treasury, which he continued to hold for many years, if not indeed to the close of his life. The duties were light, but they demanded, and at all events had, his occasional attention, even after he was otherwise provided for. Being his own—bought by his own money—it may have gratified his love of independence to feel that, if the worst came to the worst, he had his official salary to fall back upon. Among his friends, men of letters are at this time, as might have been expected, found to be most conspicuous. Virgil, who had recently been despoiled, like himself, of his paternal property, took occasion to bring his name before Mæcenas, the confidential adviser and minister of Octavius, in whom he had himself found a helpful friend. This was followed up by the commen-

dation of Varius, already celebrated as a writer of Epic poetry, and whose tragedy of "Thyestes," if we are to trust Quintilian, was not unworthy to rank with the best tragedies of Greece. Mæcenas may not at first have been too well disposed towards a follower of the republican party, who had not been sparing of his satire against many of the supporters and favourites of Octavius. He sent for Horace, however (B.C. 39), and any prejudice on this score, if prejudice there was, was ultimately got over. Mæcenas took time to form his estimate of the man, and it was not till nine months after their first interview that he sent for Horace again. When he did so, however, it was to ask him to consider himself for the future among the number of his friends. This part of Horace's story is told with admirable brevity and good feeling in the Satire from which we have already quoted, addressed to Mæcenas (B. I. Sat. 6) a few years afterwards.

"Lucky I will not call myself, as though
Thy friendship I to mere good fortune owe.
No chance it was secured me thy regards,
But Virgil first, that best of men and bards,
And then kind Varius mentioned what I was.
Before you brought, with many a faltering pause,
Dropping some few brief words (for bashfulness
Robbed me of utterance) I did not profess
That I was sprung of lineage old and great,
Or used to canter round my own estate
On Satureian barb, but what and who
I was as plainly told. As usual, you
Brief answer make me. I retire, and then,
Some nine months after, summoning me again,

You bid me 'mongst your friends assume a place :
And proud I feel that thus I won your grace,
Not by an ancestry long known to fame,
But by my life, and heart devoid of blame."

The name of Mæcenas is from this time inseparably associated with that of Horace. From what little is authentically known of him, this much may be gathered: He was a man of great general accomplishment, well versed in the literature both of Greece and Rome, devoted to literature and the society of men of letters, a lover of the fine arts and of natural history, a connoisseur of gems and precious stones, fond of living in a grand style, and of surrounding himself with people who amused him, without being always very particular as to who or what they were. For the indulgence of all these tastes, his great wealth was more than sufficient. He reclaimed the Esquiline hill from being the public nuisance we have already described, laid it out in gardens, and in the midst of these built himself a sumptuous palace, where the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore now stands, from which he commanded a superb view of the country looking towards Tivoli. To this palace, salubrious from its spacious size and the elevation of its site, Augustus, when ill, had himself carried from his own modest mansion; and from its lofty belvedere tower Nero is said to have enjoyed the spectacle of Rome in flames beneath him. Voluptuary and dilettante as Mæcenas was, he was nevertheless, like most men of a sombre and melancholy temperament, capable of great exertions; and he veiled under a cold exterior and reserved manners a habit of acute

observation, a kind heart, and, in matters of public concern, a resolute will. This latent energy of character, supported as it was by a subtle knowledge of mankind and a statesmanlike breadth of view, contributed in no small degree to the ultimate triumph of Octavius Cæsar over his rivals, and to the successful establishment of the empire in his hands. When the news of Julius Cæsar's assassination reached the young Octavius, then only nineteen, in Apollonia, it has been said that Mæcenas was in attendance upon him as his governor or tutor. Be this so or not, as soon as Octavius appears in the political arena as his uncle's avenger, Mæcenas is found by his side. In several most important negotiations he acted as his representative. Thus (B.C. 40), the year before Horace was introduced to him, he, along with Cocceius Nerva, negotiated with Antony the peace of Brundusium, which resulted in Antony's ill-starred marriage with Cæsar's sister Octavia. Two years later he was again associated with Cocceius in a similar task, on which occasion Horace and Virgil accompanied him to Brundusium. He appears to have commanded in various expeditions, both naval and military, but it was at Rome and in Council that his services were chiefly sought; and he acted as one of the chief advisers of Augustus down to about five years before his death, when, either from ill health or some other unknown cause, he abandoned political life. More than once he was charged by Augustus with the administration of the civil affairs of Italy during his own absence, intrusted with his seal, and empowered to open all his letters addressed

to the Senate, and, if necessary, to alter their contents, so as to adapt them to the condition of affairs at home. His aim, like that of Vipsanius Agrippa, who was in himself the Nelson and Wellington of the age, seems to have been to build up a united and flourishing empire in the person of Augustus. Whether from temperament or policy, or both, he set his face against the system of cruelty and extermination which disgraced the triumvirate. When Octavius was one day condemning man after man to death, Mæcenas, after a vain attempt to reach him on the tribunal, where he sat surrounded by a dense crowd, wrote upon his tablets, *Surge tandem, Carnifex!*—"Butcher, break off!" and flung them across the crowd into the lap of Cæsar, who felt the rebuke, and immediately quitted the judgment-seat. His policy was that of conciliation; and while bent on the establishment of a monarchy, from what we must fairly assume to have been a patriotic conviction that this form of government could alone meet the exigencies of the time, he endeavoured to combine this with a due regard to individual liberty, and a free expression of individual opinion.

At the time of Horace's introduction to him, Mæcenas was probably at his best, in the full vigour of his intellect, and alive with the generous emotions which must have animated a man bent as he was on securing tranquillity for the state, and healing the strife of factions, which were threatening it with ruin. His chief relaxation from the fatigues of public life was, to all appearance, found in the society of men of letters, and, judging by what Horace says (Satires, I. 9), the *vie*

intime of his social circle must have been charming. To be admitted within it was a privilege eagerly coveted, and with good reason, for not only was this in itself a stamp of distinction, but his parties were well known as the pleasantest in Rome :—

> "No house more free from all that's base,
> In none cabals more out of place.
> It hurts me not, if others be
> More rich, or better read than me ;
> Each has his place."

Like many of his contemporaries, who were eminent in political life, Mæcenas devoted himself to active literary work—for he wrote much, and on a variety of topics. His taste in literature was, however, better than his execution. His style was diffuse, affected, and obscure ; but Seneca, who tells us this, and gives some examples which justify the criticism, tells us at the same time that his genius was massive and masculine (*grande et virile*), and that he would have been eminent for eloquence, if fortune had not spoiled him. However vicious his own style may have been, the man who encouraged three such writers as Virgil, Propertius, and Horace, not to mention others of great repute, whose works have perished, was clearly a sound judge of a good style in others.

As years went on, and the cares of public life grew less onerous, habits of self-indulgence appear to have grown upon Mæcenas. It will probably be well, however, to accept with some reserve what has been said against him on this head. Then, as now, men of rank

and power were the victims of calumnious gossips and slanderous pamphleteers. His health became precarious. Incessant sleeplessness spoke of an overtasked brain and shattered nerves. Life was full of pain; still he clung to it with a craven-like tenacity. So, at least, Seneca asserts, quoting in support of his statement some very bad verses by Mæcenas, which may be thus translated :—

> "Lame in feet, and lame in fingers,
> Crooked in back, with every tooth
> Rattling in my head, yet, 'sooth,
> I'm content, so life but lingers.
> Gnaw my withers, rack my bones,
> Life, mere life, for all atones."

In one view these lines may certainly be construed to import the same sentiment as the speech of the miserable Claudio in "Measure for Measure,"—

> "The weariest and most loathèd worldly life
> That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
> Can lay on nature, is a paradise
> To what we fear of death."

But, on the other hand, they may quite as fairly be regarded as merely giving expression to the tenet of the Epicurean philosophy, that however much we may suffer from physical pain or inconvenience, it is still possible to be happy. "We know what we are; we know not what we may be!"

Not the least misfortune of Mæcenas was his marriage to a woman whom he could neither live with nor without—separating from and returning to her so often, that,

according to Seneca, he was a thousand times married, yet never had but one wife. Friends he had many, loyal and devoted friends, on whose society and sympathy he leant more and more as the years wore on. He rarely stirred from Rome, loving its smoke, its thronged and noisy streets, its whirl of human passions, as Johnson loved Fleet Street, or "the sweet shady side of Pall Mall," better than all the verdure of Tivoli, or the soft airs and exquisite scenery of Baiæ. He liked to read of these things, however; and may have found as keen a pleasure in the scenery of the 'Georgics,' or in Horace's little landscape-pictures, as most men could have extracted from the scenes which they describe.

Such was the man, ushered into whose presence, Horace, the reckless lampooner and satirist, found himself embarrassed, and at a loss for words. Horace was not of the MacSycophant class, who cannot "keep their back straight in the presence of a great man;" nor do we think he had much of the nervous apprehensiveness of the poetic temperament. Why, then, should he have felt thus abashed? Partly, it may have been, from natural diffidence at encountering a man to gain whose goodwill was a matter of no small importance, but whose goodwill, he also knew by report, was not easily won; and partly, to find himself face to face with one so conspicuously identified with the cause against which he had fought, and the men whom he had hitherto had every reason to detest.

Once admitted by Mæcenas to the inner circle of

his friends, Horace made his way there rapidly. Thus we find him, a few months afterwards, in the spring of B.C. 37, going to Brundusium with Mæcenas, who had been despatched thither on a mission of great public importance (Satires, I. 6). The first term of the triumvirate of Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus had expired at the close of the previous year. No fresh arrangement had been made, and Antony, alarmed at the growing power of Octavius in Italy, had appeared off Brundusium with a fleet of 300 sail and a strong body of troops. The Brundusians—on a hint, probably, from Octavius—forbade his landing, and he had to go on to Tarentum, where terms were ultimately arranged for a renewal of the triumvirate. The moment was a critical one, for an open rupture between Octavius and Antony was imminent, which might well have proved disastrous to the former, had Antony joined his fleet to that of the younger Pompey, which, without his aid, had already proved more than a match for the naval force of Octavius.

To judge by Horace's narrative, all the friends who accompanied Mæcenas on this occasion, except his coadjutor, Cocceius Nerva, who had three years before been engaged with him on a similar mission to Brundusium, were men whose thoughts were given more to literature than to politics. Horace starts from Rome with Heliodorus, a celebrated rhetorician, and they make their way very leisurely to Anxur (Terracina), where they are overtaken by Mæcenas.

> "'Twas fixed that we should meet with dear
> Mæcenas and Cocceius here,

Who were upon a mission bound,
Of consequence the most profound;
For who so skilled the feuds to close
Of those, once friends, who now were foes?"

This is the only allusion throughout the poem to the object of the journey. The previous day, Horace had been baulked of his dinner, the water being so bad, and his stomach so delicate, that he chose to fast rather than run the risk of making himself ill with it. And now at Terracina he found his eyes, which were weak, so troublesome, that he had to dose them well with a black wash. These are the first indications we get of habitual delicacy of health, which, if not due altogether to the fatigues and exposure of his campaign with Brutus, had probably been increased by them.

"Meanwhile beloved Mæcenas came,
Cocceius too, and brought with them
Fonteius Capito, a man
Endowed with every grace that can
A perfect gentleman attend,
And Antony's especial friend."

They push on next day to Formiæ, and are amused at Fundi (Fondi) on the way by the consequential airs of the prefect of the place. It would seem as if the peacock nature must break out the moment a man becomes a prefect or a mayor.

"There having rested for the night,
With inexpressible delight
We hail the dawn,—for we that day
At Sinuessa, on our way

With Plotius,* Virgil, Varius too,
Have an appointed rendezvous ;
Souls all, than whom the earth ne'er saw
More noble, more exempt from flaw,
Nor are there any on its round
To whom I am more firmly bound.
Oh ! what embracings, and what mirth !
Nothing, no, nothing, on this earth,
Whilst I have reason, shall I e'er
With a true genial friend compare ! "

Next day they reach Capua, where, so soon as their mules are unpacked, away

" Mæcenas hies, at ball to play ;
To sleep myself and Virgil go,
For tennis-practice is, we know,
Injurious, quite beyond all question,
Both to weak eyes and weak digestion."

With these and suchlike details Horace carries us pleasantly on with his party to Brundusium. They were manifestly in no hurry, for they took fourteen days, according to Gibbon's careful estimate, to travel 378 Roman miles. That they might have got over the ground much faster, if necessary, is certain from what is known of other journeys. Cæsar posted 100 miles a-day. Tiberius travelled 200 miles in twenty-four hours, when he was hastening to close the eyes of his brother Drusus ; and Statius (Sylv. 14, Carm. 3) talks of a man leaving Rome in the morning, and being at Baiæ or Puteoli, 127 miles off, before night.

* Plotius Tucca, himself a poet, and associated by Virgil with Varius in editing the Æneid after the poet's death.

> "Have but the will, be sure you'll find the way.
> What shall stop him, who starts at break of day
> From sleeping Rome, and on the Lucrine sails
> Before the sunshine into twilight pales?"

Just as, according to Sydney Smith, in his famous allusion to the triumphs of railway travelling, "the early Scotchman scratches himself in the morning mists of the North, and has his porridge in Piccadilly before the setting sun."

Horace treats the expedition to Brundusium entirely as if it had been a pleasant tour. Gibbon thinks he may have done so purposely, to convince those who were jealous of his intimacy with the great statesman, "that his thoughts and occupations on the event were far from being of a serious or political nature." But it was a rule with Horace, in all his writings, never to indicate, by the slightest word, that he knew any of the political secrets which, as the intimate friend of Mæcenas, he could scarcely have failed to know. He hated babbling of all kinds. A man who reported the private talk of friends, even on comparatively indifferent topics,—

> "The churl, who out of doors will spread
> What 'mongst familiar friends is said,"—

(Epistle I. v. 24), was his especial aversion; and he has more than once said, only not in such formal phrase, what Milton puts into the mouth of his "Samson Agonistes,"

> "To have revealed
> Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,

How heinous had the fact been! how deserving
Contempt, and scorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front!"

Moreover, reticence, the indispensable quality, not of statesmen merely, but of their intimates, was not so rare a virtue in these days as in our own; and as none would have expected Horace, in a poem of this kind, to make any political confidences, he can scarcely be supposed to have written it with any view to throwing the gossips of Rome off the scent. The excursion had been a pleasant one, and he thought its incidents worth noting. Hence the poem. Happily for us, who get from it most interesting glimpses of some of the familiar aspects of Roman life and manners, of which we should otherwise have known nothing. Here, for example, is a sketch of how people fared in travelling by canal in those days, near Rome. Overcrowding, we see, is not an evil peculiar to our own days.

"Now 'gan the night with gentle hand
To fold in shadows all the land,
And stars along the sky to scatter,
When there arose a hideous clatter,
Slaves slanging bargemen, bargemen slaves;
'Ho, haul up here! how now, ye knaves,
Inside three hundred people stuff?
Already there are quite enough!'
Collected were the fares at last,
The mule that drew our barge made fast,
But not till a good hour was gone.
Sleep was not to be thought upon,

The cursèd gnats were so provoking,
The bull-frogs set up such a croaking.
A bargeman, too, a drunken lout,
And passenger, sang turn about,
In tones remarkable for strength,
Their absent sweethearts, till at length
The passenger began to doze,
When up the stalwart bargeman rose,
His fastenings from the stone unwound,
And left the mule to graze around;
Then down upon his back he lay,
And snored in a terrific way."

Neither is the following allusion to the Jews and their creed without its value, especially when followed, as it is, by Horace's avowal, almost in the words of Lucretius (B. VI. 56), of what was then his own. Later in life he came to a very different conclusion. When the travellers reach Egnatia, their ridicule is excited by being shown or told, it is not very clear which, of incense kindled in the temple there miraculously without the application of fire.

"This may your circumcisèd Jew
Believe, but never I. For true
I hold it that the Deities
Enjoy themselves in careless ease;*
Nor think, when Nature, spurning Law,
Does something which inspires our awe,
'Tis sent by the offended gods
Direct from their august abodes."

* So Tennyson, in his "Lotus-Eaters:"—

"Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotus-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind."

See the whole of the passage.

Had Horace known anything of natural science, he might not have gone so far to seek for the explanation of the seeming miracle.

Gibbon speaks contemptuously of many of the incidents recorded in this poem, asking, "How could a man of taste reflect on them the day after?" But the poem has much more than a merely literary interest; thanks to such passages as these, and to the charming tribute by Horace to his friends previously cited.

Nothing can better illustrate the footing of easy friendship on which he soon came to stand with Mæcenas than the following poem, which must have been written before the year B.C. 32; for in that year Terentia became the mistress of the great palace on the Esquiline, and the allusion in the last verse is much too familiar to have been intended for her. Horace, whose delicacy of stomach was probably notorious, had apparently been the victim of a practical joke—a species of rough fun to which the Romans of the upper classes appear to have been particularly prone. It is difficult otherwise to understand how he could have stumbled at Mæcenas's table on a dish so overdosed with garlic as that which provoked this humorous protest. From what we know of the abominations of an ordinary Roman banquet, the vegetable stew in this instance must have reached a climax of unusual atrocity.

"If his old father's throat any impious sinner
Has cut with unnatural hand to the bone,
Give him garlic, more noxious than hemlock, at dinner.
Ye gods! the strong stomachs that reapers must own!

"With what poison is this that my vitals are heated?
By viper's blood—certes, it cannot be less—
Stewed into the potherbs; can I have been cheated?
Or Canidia, did she cook the villanous mess?

"When Medea was struck by the handsome sea-rover,
Who in beauty outshone all his Argonaut band,
This mixture she took to lard Jason all over,
And so tamed the fire-breathing bulls to his hand.

"With this her fell presents she dyed and infected,
On his innocent leman avenging the slight
Of her terrible beauty, forsaken, neglected,
And then on her car, dragon-wafted, took flight.

"Never star on Apulia, the thirsty and arid,
Exhaled a more baleful or pestilent dew,
And the gift, which invincible Hercules carried,
Burned not to his bones more remorselessly through.

"Should you e'er long again for such relish as this is,
Devoutly I'll pray, wag Mæcenas, I vow,
With her hand that your mistress arrest all your kisses,
And lie as far off as the couch will allow."

It is startling to our notions to find so direct a reference as that in the last verse to the "reigning favourite" of Mæcenas; but what are we to think of the following lines, which point unequivocally to Mæcenas's wife, in the following Ode addressed to her husband (Odes, II. 12)?

"Would you, friend, for Phrygia's hoarded gold,
Or all that Achæmenes' self possesses,
Or e'en for what Araby's coffers hold,
Barter one lock of her clustering tresses,

While she stoops her throat to your burning kiss,
Or, fondly cruel, the bliss denies you,
She would have you snatch, or will, snatching this
Herself, with a sweeter thrill surprise you ?"

If Mæcenas allowed his friends to write of his wife in this strain, it is scarcely to be wondered at if that coquettish and capricious lady gave, as she did, "that worthy man good grounds for uneasiness."

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLICATION OF FIRST BOOK OF SATIRES. — HIS FRIENDS. — RECEIVES THE SABINE FARM FROM MÆCENAS.

In B.C. 34, Horace published the First Book of his Satires, and placed in front of it one specially addressed to Mæcenas—a course which he adopted in each successive section of his poems, apparently to mark his sense of obligation to him as the most honoured of his friends. The name *Satires* does not truly indicate the nature of this series. They are rather didactic poems, couched in a more or less dramatic form, and carried on in an easy conversational tone, without for the most part any definite purpose, often diverging into such collateral topics as suggest themselves by the way, with all the ease and buoyancy of agreeable talk, and getting back or not, as it may happen, into the main line of idea with which they set out. Some of them are conceived in a vein of fine irony throughout. Others, like "The Journey to Brundusium," are mere narratives, relieved by humorous illustrations. But we do not find in them the epigrammatic force, the sternness of moral rebuke, or the scathing spirit of sarcasm, which are commonly

associated with the idea of satire. Literary display appears never to be aimed at. The plainest phrases, the homeliest illustrations, the most everyday topics—if they come in the way—are made use of for the purpose of insinuating or enforcing some useful truth. Point and epigram are the last things thought of; and therefore it is that Pope's translations, admirable as in themselves they are, fail to give an idea of the lightness of touch, the shifting lights and shades, the carelessness alternating with force, the artless natural manner, which distinguish these charming essays. "The terseness of Horace's language in his Satires," it has been well said, "is that of a proverb, neat because homely; while the terseness of Pope is that of an epigram, which will only become homely in time, because it is neat."

In writing these Satires, which he calls merely rhythmical prose, Horace disclaims for himself the title of poet; and at this time it would appear as if he had not even conceived the idea of "modulating Æolic song to the Italian lyre," on which he subsequently rested his hopes of posthumous fame. The very words of his disclaimer, however, show how well he appreciated the poet's gifts (Satires, I. 4):—

"First from the roll I strike myself of those I poets call,
For merely to compose in verse is not the all-in-all;
Nor if a man shall write, like me, things nigh to prose akin,
Shall he, however well he write, the name of poet win?

To genius, to the man whose soul is touched with fire divine,
Whose voice speaks like a trumpet-note, that honoured name assign.
. . . . . 'Tis not enough that you compose your verse
In diction irreproachable, pure, scholarly, and terse,
Which, dislocate its cadence, by anybody may
Be spoken like the language of the father in the play.
Divest those things which now I write, and Lucilius wrote of yore,'
Of certain measured cadences, by setting that before
Which was behind, and that before which I had placed behind,
Yet by no alchemy will you in the residuum find
The members still apparent of the dislocated bard,"—

a result which he contends would not ensue, however much you might disarrange the language of a passage of true poetry, such as one he quotes from Ennius, the poetic charm of which, by the way, is not very apparent. Schooled, however, as he had been, in the pure literature of Greece, Horace aimed at a conciseness and purity of style which had been hitherto unknown in Roman satire, and studied, not unsuccessfully, to give to his own work, by great and well-disguised elaboration of finish, the concentrated force and picturesque precision which are large elements in all genuine poetry. His own practice, as we see from its results, is given in the following lines, and a better description of how didactic or satiric poetry should be written could scarcely be desired (Satires, I. 10).

"'Tis not enough, a poet's fame to make,
That you with bursts of mirth your audience shake;
And yet to this, as all experience shows,
No small amount of skill and talent goes.
Your style must be concise, that what you say
May flow on clear and smooth, nor lose its way,
Stumbling and halting through a chaos drear
Of cumbrous words, that load the weary ear;
And you must pass from grave to gay,—now, like
The rhetorician, vehemently strike,
Now, like the poet, deal a lighter hit
With easy playfulness and polished wit,—
Veil the stern vigour of a soul robust,
And flash your fancies, while like death you thrust;
For men are more impervious, as a rule,
To slashing censure than to ridicule.
Here lay the merit of those writers, who
In the Old Comedy our fathers drew;
Here should we struggle in their steps to tread
Whom fop Hermogenes has never read,
Nor that mere ape of his, who all day long
Makes Calvus and Catullus all his song."

The concluding hit at Hermogenes Tigellius and his double is very characteristic of Horace's manner. When he has worked up his description of a vice to be avoided or a virtue to be pursued, he generally drives home his lesson by the mention of some well-known person's name, thus importing into his literary practice the method taken by his father, as we have seen, to impress his ethical teachings upon himself in his youth. The allusion to Calvus and Catullus, the only one anywhere made to these poets by Horace, is curious; but it would be wrong to infer from it, that Horace meant to disparage these fine poets. Calvus had a great reputa-

tion both as an orator and poet. But, except some insignificant fragments, nothing of what he wrote is left. How Catullus wrote we do, however, know; and although it is conceivable that Horace had no great sympathy with some of his love verses, which were probably of too sentimental a strain for his taste, we may be sure that he admired the brilliant genius as well as the fine workmanship of many of his other poems. At all events, he had too much good sense to launch a sneer at so great a poet recently dead, which would not only have been in the worst taste, but might justly have been ascribed to jealousy. When he talks, therefore, of a pair of fribbles who can sing nothing but Calvus and Catullus, it is, as Macleane has said in his note on the passage, "as if a man were to say of a modern English coxcomb, that he could sing Moore's ballads from beginning to end, but could not understand a line of Shakespeare,"—no disparagement to Moore, whatever it might be to the vocalist. Hermogenes and his ape (whom we may identify with one Demetrius, who is subsequently coupled with him in the same satire) were musicians and vocalists, idolised, after the manner of modern Italian singers, by the young misses of Rome. Pampered favourites of fashion, the Farinellis of the hour, their opinion on all matters of taste was sure to be as freely given as it was worthless. They had been, moreover, so indiscreet as to provoke Horace's sarcasm by running down his verses. Leave criticism, he rejoins, to men who have a right to judge. Stick to your proper vocation, and

"To puling girls, that listen and adore,
Your love-lorn chants and woful wailings pour!"

In the same Satire we have proof how warmly Horace thought and spoke of living poets. Thus :—

"In grave Iambic measures Pollio sings
For our delight the deeds of mighty kings.
The stately Epic Varius leads along,
And where is voice so resonant, so strong?
The Muses of the woods and plains have shed
Their every grace and charm on Virgil's head."

With none of those will he compete. Satire is his element, and there he proclaims himself to be an humble follower of his great predecessor. But while he bows to Lucilius as his master, and owns him superior in polish and scholarly grace to the satirists who preceded him, still, he continues—

"Still, were he living now—had only such
Been Fate's decree—he would have blotted much,
Cut everything away that could be called
Crude or superfluous, or tame, or bald;
Oft scratched his head, the labouring poet's trick,
And bitten all his nails down to the quick."

And then he lays down the canon for all high-class composition, which can never be too often enforced :—

"Oh yes, believe me, you must draw your pen
Not once or twice, but o'er and o'er again,
Through what you've written, if you would entice
The man who reads you once to read you twice,
Not making popular applause your cue,
But looking to find audience fit though few. (C.)

He had himself followed the rule, and found the reward. With natural exultation he appeals against

the judgment of men of the Hermogenes type to an array of critics of whose good opinion he might well be proud :—

"Mæcenas, Virgil, Varius,—if I please
In my poor writings these and such as these,—
If Plotius, Valgius, Fuscus will commend,
And good Octavius, I've achieved my end.
You, noble Pollio (let your friend disclaim
All thoughts of flattery, when he names your name),
Messala and his brother, Servius too,
And Bibulus, and Furnius kind and true,
With others, whom, despite their sense and wit,
And friendly hearts, I purposely omit ;
Such I would have my critics ; men to gain
Whose smiles were pleasure, to forget them pain." (C.)

It is not strange that Horace, even in these early days, numbered so many distinguished men among his friends, for, the question of genius apart, there must have been something particularly engaging in his kindly and affectionate nature. He was a good hater, as all warm-hearted men are; and when his blood was up, he could, like Diggory, "remember his swashing blow." He would fain, as he says himself (Satires, II. 1), be at peace with all men :—

"But he who shall my temper try—
'Twere best to touch me not, say I—
Shall rue it, and through all the town
My verse shall damn him with renown."

But with his friends he was forbearing, devoted, lenient to their foibles, not boring them with his own, liberal in construing their motives, and as trustful in their loyalty to himself as he was assured of his own

to them; clearly a man to be loved—a man pleasant to meet and pleasant to remember, constant, and to be relied on in sunshine or in gloom. Friendship with him was not a thing to be given by halves. He could see a friend's faults—no man quicker—but it did not lie in his mouth to babble about them. He was not one of those who "whisper faults and hesitate dislikes." Love me, love my friend, was his rule. Neither would he sit quietly by, while his friends were being disparaged. And if he has occasion himself to rally their foibles in his poems, he does so openly, and does it with such an implied sympathy and avowal of kindred weakness in himself, that offence was impossible. Above all, he possessed in perfection what Mr Disraeli happily calls "the rare gift of raillery, which flatters the self-love of those whom it seems not to spare." These characteristics are admirably indicated by Persius (I. 116) in speaking of his Satires—

> "Arch Horace, while he strove to mend,
> Probed all the foibles of his smiling friend;
> Played lightly round and round each peccant part,
> And won, unfelt, an entrance to his heart." (Gifford.)

And we may be sure the same qualities were even more conspicuous in his personal intercourse with his friends. Satirist though he was, he is continually inculcating the duty of charitable judgments towards all men.

> "What's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what's resisted,"

is a thought often suggested by his works. The best need large grains of allowance, and to whom should

these be given if not to friends? Here is his creed on this subject (Satires, I. 3) :—

"True love, we know, is blind; defects, that blight
The loved one's charms, escape the lover's sight,
Nay, pass for beauties; as Balbinus shows
A passion for the wen on Agna's nose.
Oh, with our friendships that we did the same,
And screened our blindness under virtue's name!
For we are bound to treat a friend's defect
With touch most tender, and a fond respect;
Even as a father treats a child's, who hints,
The urchin's eyes are roguish, if he squints:
Or if he be as stunted, short, and thick,
As Sisyphus the dwarf, will call him 'chick!'
If crooked all ways, in back, in legs, and thighs,
With softening phrases will the flaw disguise.
So, if one friend too close a fist betrays,
Let us ascribe it to his frugal ways;
Or is another—such we often find—
To flippant jest and braggart talk inclined,
'Tis only from a kindly wish to try
To make the time 'mongst friends go lightly by;
Another's tongue is rough and over-free,
Let's call it bluntness and sincerity;
Another's choleric; him we must screen,
As cursed with feelings for his peace too keen.
This is the course, methinks, that makes a friend,
And, having made, secures him to the end."

What wonder, such being his practice—for Horace in this as in other things acted up to his professions—that he was so dear, as we see he was, to so many of the best men of his time? The very contrast which his life presented to that of most of his associates must have helped to attract them to him. Most of them

were absorbed in either political or military pursuits. Wealth, power, dignity, the splendid prizes of ambition, were the dream of their lives. And even those whose tastes inclined mainly towards literature and art were not exempt from the prevailing passion for riches and display. Rich, they were eager to be more rich; well placed in society, they were covetous of higher social distinction. Now at Rome, gay, luxurious, dissipated; anon in Spain, Parthia, Syria, Africa, or wherever duty, interest, or pleasure called them, encountering perils by land and sea with reckless indifference to fatigue and danger, always with a hunger at their hearts for something, which, when found, did not appease it; they must have felt a peculiar interest in a man who, without apparent effort, seemed to get so much more out of life than they were able to do, with all their struggles, and all their much larger apparent means of enjoyment. They must have seen that wealth and honour were both within his grasp, and they must have known, too, that it was from no lack of appreciation of either that he deliberately declined to seek them. Wealth would have purchased for him many a refined pleasure which he could heartily appreciate, and honours might have saved him from some of the social slights which must have tested his philosophy. But he told them, in every variety of phrase and illustration—in ode, in satire, and epistle—that without self-control and temperance in all things, there would be no joy without remorse, no pleasure without fatigue—that it is from within that happiness must come, if it come at all, and that unless the mind

has schooled itself to peace by the renunciation of covetous desires,

> "We may be wise, or rich, or great,
> But never can be blest."

And as he spoke, so they must have seen he lived. Wealth and honours would manifestly have been bought too dearly at the sacrifice of the tranquillity and independence which he early set before him as the objects of his life.

> "The content, surpassing wealth,
> The sage in meditation found;"

the content which springs from living in consonance with the dictates of nature, from healthful pursuits, from a conscience void of offence; the content which is incompatible with the gnawing disquietudes of avarice, of ambition, of social envy,—with that in his heart, he knew he could be true to his genius, and make life worth living for. A man of this character must always be rare; least of all was he likely to be common in Horace's day, when the men in whose circle he was moving were engaged in the great task of crushing the civil strife which had shaken the stability of the Roman power, and of consolidating an empire greater and more powerful than her greatest statesmen had previously dreamed of. But all the more delightful to these men must it have been to come into intimate contact with a man who, while perfectly appreciating their special gifts and aims, could bring them back from the stir and excitement of their habitual life to think of other things than social or political

successes,—to look into their own hearts, and to live for a time for something better and more enduring than the triumphs of vanity or ambition.

Horace from the first seems to have wisely determined to keep himself free from those shackles which most men are so eager to forge for themselves, by setting their heart on wealth and social distinction. With perfect sincerity he had told Mæcenas, as we have seen, that he coveted neither, and he gives his reasons thus (Satires, I. 6):—

"For then a larger income must be made,
Men's favour courted, and their whims obeyed;
Nor could I then indulge a lonely mood,
Away from town, in country solitude,
For the false retinue of pseudo-friends,
That all my movements servilely attends.
More slaves must then be fed, more horses too,
And chariots bought. Now have I nought to do,
If I would even to Tarentum ride,
But mount my bobtailed mule, my wallets tied
Across his flanks, which, flapping as we go,
With my ungainly ankles to and fro,
Work his unhappy sides a world of weary woe."

From this wise resolution he never swerved, and so through life he maintained an attitude of independence in thought and action which would otherwise have been impossible. He does not say it in so many words, but the sentiment meets us all through his pages, which Burns, whose mode of thinking so often reminds us of Horace, puts into the line,

"My freedom's a lairdship nae monarch may touch."

And we shall hereafter have occasion to see that, when put to the proof, he acted upon this creed. Well might the overworked statesman have envied the poet the ease and freedom of his life, and longed to be able to spend a day as Horace, in the same Satire, tells us his days were passed!—

"I walk alone, by mine own fancy led,
Inquire the price of potherbs and of bread,
The circus cross, to see its tricks and fun,
The forum, too, at times, near set of sun;
With other fools there do I stand and gape
Round fortune-tellers' stalls, thence home escape
To a plain meal of pancakes, pulse, and pease;
Three young boy-slaves attend on me with these.
Upon a slab of snow-white marble stand
A goblet and two beakers; near at hand,
A common ewer, patera, and bowl;
Campania's potteries produced the whole.
To sleep then I. . . . .
I keep my couch till ten, then walk awhile,
Or having read or writ what may beguile
A quiet after-hour, anoint my limbs
With oil, not such as filthy Natta skims
From lamps defrauded of their unctuous fare.
And when the sunbeams, grown too hot to bear,
Warn me to quit the field, and hand-ball play,
The bath takes all my weariness away.
Then, having lightly dined, just to appease
The sense of emptiness, I take mine ease,
Enjoying all home's simple luxury.
This is the life of bard unclogged, like me,
By stern ambition's miserable weight.
So placed, I own with gratitude, my state
Is sweeter, ay, than though a quæstor's power
From sire and grandsire's sires had been my dower."

It would not have been easy to bribe a man of these simple habits and tastes, as some critics have contended that Horace was bribed, to become the laureate of a party to which he had once been opposed, even had Mæcenas wished to do so. His very indifference to those favours which were within the disposal of a great minister of state, placed him on a vantage-ground in his relations with Mæcenas which he could in no other way have secured. Nor, we may well believe, would that distinguished man have wished it otherwise. Surrounded as he was by servility and selfish baseness, he must have felt himself irresistibly drawn towards a nature so respectful, yet perfectly manly and independent, as that of the poet. Nor can we doubt that intimacy had grown into friendship, warm and sincere, before he gratified his own feelings, while he made Horace happy for life, by presenting him with a small estate in the Sabine country—a gift which, we may be sure, he knew well would be of all gifts the most welcome. It is demonstrable that it was not given earlier than B.C. 33, or after upwards of four years of intimate acquaintance. That Horace had longed for such a possession, he tells us himself (Satires, II. 6). He had probably expressed his longing in the hearing of his friend, and to such a friend the opportunity of turning the poet's dream into a reality must have been especially delightful.

The gift was a slight one for Mæcenas to bestow; but, with Horace's fondness for the country, it had a value for him beyond all price. It gave him a competency — *satis superque* — enough and

more than he wanted for his needs. It gave him leisure, health, amusement; and, more precious than all, it secured him undisturbed freedom of thought, and opportunities for that calm intercourse with nature which he "needed for his spirit's health." Never was gift better bestowed, or more worthily requited. To it we are indebted for much of that poetry which has linked the name of Mæcenas with that of the poet in associations the most engaging, and has afforded, and will afford, ever-new delight to successive generations. The Sabine farm was situated in the Valley of Ustica, thirty miles from Rome, and twelve miles from Tivoli. It possessed the attraction, no small one to Horace, of being very secluded—Varia (Vico Varo), the nearest town, being four miles off—yet, at the same time, within an easy distance of Rome. When his spirits wanted the stimulus of society or the bustle of the capital, which they often did, his ambling mule could speedily convey him thither; and when jaded, on the other hand, by the noise and racket and dissipations of Rome, he could, in the same homely way, bury himself within a few hours among the hills, and there, under the shadow of his favourite Lucretilis, or by the banks of the clear-flowing and ice-cold Digentia, either stretch himself to dream upon the grass, lulled by the murmurs of the stream, or do a little farming in the way of clearing his fields of stones, or turning over a furrow here and there with the hoe. There was a rough wildness in the scenery and a sharpness in the air, both of which Horace liked, although, as years advanced and his health grew more delicate,

he had to leave it in the colder months for Tivoli or Baiæ. He built a villa upon it, or added to one already there, the traces of which still exist. The farm gave employment to five families of free *coloni*, who were under the superintendence of a bailiff; and the poet's domestic establishment was composed of eight slaves. The site of the farm is at the present day a favourite resort of travellers, of Englishmen especially, who visit it in such numbers, and trace its features with such enthusiasm, that the resident peasantry, "who cannot conceive of any other source of interest in one so long dead and unsainted than that of co-patriotism or consanguinity," believe Horace to have been an Englishman.* What aspect it presented in Horace's time we gather from one of his Epistles (I. 16) :—

"About my farm, dear Quinctius: You would know
What sort of produce for its lord 'twill grow;
Plough-land is it, or meadow-land, or soil
For apples, vine-clad elms, or olive-oil?
So (but you'll think me garrulous) I'll write
A full description of its form and site.
In long continuous lines the mountains run,
Cleft by a valley, which twice feels the sun—
Once on the right, when first he lifts his beams;
Once on the left, when he descends in steams.
You'd praise the climate; well, and what d'ye say
To sloes and cornels hanging from the spray?
What to the oak and ilex, that afford
Fruit to the cattle, shelter to their lord?
What, but that rich Tarentum must have been
Transplanted nearer Rome, with all its green?

* Letter by Mr Dennis: Milman's 'Horace.' London, 1849. P. 109.

Then there's a fountain, of sufficient size
To name the river that takes thence its rise—
Not Thracian Hebrus colder or more pure,
Of power the head's and stomach's ills to cure.
This sweet retirement—nay, 'tis more than sweet—
Insures my health even in September's heat." (C.)

Here is what a last year's tourist found it :*—

"Following a path along the brink of the torrent Digentia, we passed a towering rock, on which once stood Vacuna's shrine, and entered a pastoral region of well-watered meadow-lands, enamelled with flowers and studded with chestnut and fruit trees. Beneath their sheltering shade peasants were whiling away the noontide hours. Here sat Daphnis piping sweet witching melodies on a reed to his rustic Phidyle, whilst Lydia and she wove wreaths of wild-flowers, and Lyce sped down to the edge of the stream and brought us cooling drink in a bulging conca borne on her head. Its waters were as deliciously refreshing as they could have been when the poet himself gratefully recorded how often they revived his strength ; and one longed to think, and hence half believed, that our homely Hebe, like her fellows, was sprung from the coloni who tilled his fields and dwelt in the five homesteads of which he sings. . . . Near the little village of Licenza, standing like its loftier neighbour, Civitella, on a steep hill at the foot of Lucretilis, we turned off the path, crossed a thickly-wooded knoll, and came to an orchard, in which two young labourers were at work. We asked where the remains of Horace's farm were. '*A piè tui !*' answered the nearest of them, in a dialect more like Latin than Italian. So saying, he began with a shovel to uncover a massive floor in very fair preservation ; a little farther on was another, crumbling to pieces. Chaupy has luckily saved one all doubt as to the site of the farm, establishing to our minds convincingly

* 'Pall Mall Gazette,' August 16, 1869.

that it could scarcely have stood on ground other than that on which at this moment we were. As the shovel was clearing the floors, we thought how applicable to Horace himself were the lines he addressed to Fuscus Aristius, 'Naturam expelles,' &c.—

> " ' Drive Nature forth by force, she'll turn and rout
> The false refinements that would keep her out ;' (C.)

For here was just enough of his home left to show how nature, creeping on step by step, had overwhelmed his handiwork and reasserted her sway. Again, pure and Augustan in design as was the pavement before us, how little could it vie with the hues and odours of the grasses that bloomed around it!—'Deterius Libycis' &c.—

> 'Is springing grass less sweet to nose and eyes
> Than Libyan marble's tesselated dyes?' (C.)

" Indeed, so striking were these coincidences that we were as nearly as possible going off on the wrong tack, and singing 'Io Pæan' to Dame Nature herself at the expense of the bard; but we were soon brought back to our allegiance by a sense of the way in which all we saw tallied with the description of him who sang of nature so surpassingly well, who challenges posterity in charmed accents, and could shape the sternest and most concise of tongues into those melodious cadences that invest his undying verse with all the magic of music and all the freshness of youth. For this was clearly the 'angulus iste,' the nook which 'restored him to himself'—this the lovely spot which his steward longed to exchange for the slums of Rome. Below lay the greensward by the river, where it was sweet to recline in slumber. Here grew the vines, still trained, like his own, on the trunks and branches of trees. Yonder the brook which the rain would swell till it overflowed its margin, and his lazy steward and slaves were fain to bank it up; and above, among a wild jumble of hills, lay the

woods where, on the Calends of March, Faunus interposed to save him from the falling tree, and where another miracle preserved him from the attack of the wolf as he strolled along unarmed, singing of the soft voice and sweet smiles of his Lalage! The brook is now nearly dammed up; a wall of close-fitting rough-hewn stones gathers its waters into a still, dark pool; its overflow gushes out in a tiny rill that rushed down beside our path, mingling its murmur with the hum of myriads of insects that swarmed in the air."

On this farm lovers of Horace have been fain to place the fountain of Bandusia, which the poet loved so well, and to which he prophesied, and truly, as the issue has proved, immortality from his song (Odes, III. 13). Charming as the poem is, there could be no stronger proof of the poet's hold upon the hearts of men of all ages than the enthusiasm with which the very site of the spring has been contested.

"Bandusia's fount, in clearness crystalline,
O worthy of the wine, the flowers we vow!
To-morrow shall be thine
A kid, whose crescent brow

"Is sprouting, all for love and victory,
In vain; his warm red blood, so early stirred,
Thy gelid stream shall dye,
Child of the wanton herd.

"Thee the fierce Sirian star, to madness fired,
Forbears to touch; sweet cool thy waters yield
To ox with ploughing tired,
And flocks that range afield.

"Thou too one day shall win proud eminence
'Mid honoured founts, while I the ilex sing

Crowning the cavern, whence
Thy babbling wavelets spring." (C.).

Several commentators maintain, on what appears to be very inconclusive grounds, that the fountain was at Palazzo, six miles from Venusia. But the poem is obviously inspired by a fountain whose babble had often soothed the ear of Horace, long after he had ceased to visit Venusia. On his farm, therefore, let us believe it to exist, whichever of the springs that are still there we may choose to identify with his description. For there are several, and the local guides are by no means dogmatic as to the "*vero fonte.*" That known as the "Fonte della Corte" seems to make out the strongest case for itself. It is within a few hundred yards of the villa, most abundant, and in this respect "fit" to name the river that there takes its rise, which the others—at present, at least—certainly are not.

Horace is never weary of singing the praises of his mountain home—"*Satis beatus unicis Sabinis,*"

"With what I have completely blest,
My happy little Sabine nest"—

Odes, II. 18.

are the words in which he contrasts his own entire happiness with the restless misery of a millionaire in the midst of his splendour. Again, in one of his Odes to Mæcenas (III. 16) he takes up and expands the same theme.

"In my crystal stream, my woodland, though its acres are but few,
And the trust that I shall gather home my crops in season due,

Lies a joy, which he may never grasp, who rules in gorgeous state
Fertile Africa's dominions. Happier, happier far my fate!
Though for me no bees Calabrian store their honey, nor doth wine
Sickening in the Læstrygonian amphora for me refine;
Though for me no flocks unnumbered, browsing Gallia's pastures fair,
Pant beneath their swelling fleeces, I at least am free from care;
Haggard want with direful clamour ravins never at my door,
Nor wouldst thou, if more I wanted, oh my friend, deny me more.
Appetites subdued will make me richer with my scanty gains,
Than the realms of Alyattes wedded to Mygdonia's plains.
Much will evermore be wanting unto those who much demand;
Blest, whom Jove with what sufficeth dowers, but dowers with sparing hand."

It is the nook of earth which, beyond all others, has a charm for him,—the one spot where he is all his own. Here, as Wordsworth beautifully says, he

> "Exults in freedom, can with rapture vouch
> For the dear blessings of a lowly couch,
> A natural meal, days, months from Nature's hand,
> Time, place, and business all at his command."

It is in this delightful retreat that, in one of his most graceful Odes, he thus invites the fair Tyndaris to pay him a visit (I. 17):—

"My own sweet Lucretilis ofttime can lure
From his native Lycæus kind Faunus the fleet,

To watch o'er my flocks, and to keep them secure
From summer's fierce winds, and its rains, and its heat.

"There the mates of a lord of too pungent a fragrance
Securely through brake and o'er precipice climb,
And crop, as they wander in happiest vagrance,
The arbutus green, and the sweet-scented thyme.

"Nor murderous wolf nor green snake may assail
My innocent kidlings, dear Tyndaris, when
His pipings resound through Ustica's low vale,
Till each mossed rock in music makes answer again.

"The muse is still dear to the gods, and they shield
Me, their dutiful bard; with a bounty divine
They have blessed me with all that the country can yield;
Then come, and whatever I have shall be thine!

"Here screened from the dog-star, in valley retired,
Shalt thou sing that old song thou canst warble so well,
Which tells how one passion Penelope fired,
And charmed fickle Circe herself by its spell.

"Here cups shalt thou sip, 'neath the broad-spreading shade
Of the innocent vintage of Lesbos at ease;
No fumes of hot ire shall our banquet invade,
Or mar that sweet festival under the trees.

"And fear not, lest Cyrus, that jealous young bear,
On thy poor little self his rude fingers should set—
Should pluck from thy bright locks the chaplet, and tear
Thy dress, that ne'er harmed him nor any one yet."

Had Milton this Ode in his thought, when he invited his friend Lawes to a repast,

> "Light and choice,
> Of Attic taste with wine, whence we may rise,
> To hear the lute well touched, and artful voice
> Warble immortal notes, and Tuscan air"?

The reference in the last verse to the violence of the lady's lover—a violence of which ladies of her class were constantly the victims—rather suggests that this Ode, if addressed to a real personage at all, was meant less as an invitation to the Sabine farm than as a balm to the lady's wounded spirit.

In none of his poems is the poet's deep delight in the country life of his Sabine home more apparent than in the following (Satires, II. 6), which, both for its biographical interest and as a specimen of his best manner in his Satires, we give entire :—

"My prayers with this I used to charge,—
A piece of land not very large,
Wherein there should a garden be,
A clear spring flowing ceaselessly,
And where, to crown the whole, there should
A patch be found of growing wood.
All this, and more, the gods have sent,
And I am heartily content.
Oh son of Maia, that I may
These bounties keep is all I pray.
If ne'er by craft or base design
I've swelled what little store is mine,
Nor mean, it ever shall be wrecked
By profligacy or neglect;
If never from my lips a word
Shall drop of wishes so absurd
As,—'Had I but that little nook
Next to my land, that spoils its look!
Or—'Would some lucky chance unfold
A crock to me of hidden gold,
As to the man whom Hercules
Enriched and settled at his ease,

Who, with the treasure he had found,
Bought for himself the very ground
Which he before for hire had tilled!'
If I with gratitude am filled
For what I have—by this I dare
Adjure you to fulfil my prayer,
That you with fatness will endow
My little herd of cattle now,
And all things else their lord may own,
Except his sorry wits alone,
And be, as heretofore, my chief
Protector, guardian, and relief!
So, when from town and all its ills
I to my perch among the hills
Retreat, what better theme to choose
Than satire for my homely Muse?
No fell ambition wastes me there,
No, nor the south wind's leaden air,
Nor Autumn's pestilential breath,
With victims feeding hungry death.
Sire of the morn, or if more dear
The name of Janus to thine ear,
Through whom whate'er by man is done,
From life's first dawning, is begun
(So willed the gods for man's estate),
Do thou my verse initiate!
At Rome you hurry me away
To bail my friend; 'Quick, no delay,
Or some one—could worse luck befall you?—
Will in the kindly task forestall you.'
So go I must, although the wind
Is north and killingly unkind,
Or snow, in thickly-falling flakes,
The wintry day more wintry makes.
And when, articulate and clear,
I've spoken what may cost me dear,

Elbowing the crowd that round me close,
I'm sure to crush somebody's toes.
'I say, where are you pushing to?
What would you have, you madman, you?'
So flies he at poor me, 'tis odds,
And curses me by all his gods.
'You think that you, now, I daresay,
May push whatever stops your way,
When you are to Mæcenas bound!'
Sweet, sweet, as honey is the sound,
I won't deny, of that last speech,
But then no sooner do I reach
The dusky Esquiline, than straight
Buzz, buzz around me runs the prate
Of people pestering me with cares,
All about other men's affairs.
'To-morrow, Roscius bade me state,
He trusts you'll be in court by eight!'
'The scriveners, worthy Quintus, pray,
You'll not forget they meet to-day,
Upon a point both grave and new,
One touching the whole body, too.'
'Do get Mæcenas, do, to sign
This application here of mine!'
'Well, well, I'll try.' 'You can with ease
Arrange it, if you only please.'
Close on eight years it now must be,
Since first Mæcenas numbered me
Among his friends, as one to take
Out driving with him, and to make
The confidant of trifles, say,
Like this, 'What is the time of day?'
'The Thracian gladiator, can
One match him with the Syrian?'
'These chilly mornings will do harm,
If one don't mind to wrap up warm;'

Such nothings as without a fear
One drops into the chinkiest ear.
Yet all this time hath envy's glance
On me looked more and more askance.
From mouth to mouth such comments run:
'Our friend indeed is Fortune's son.
Why, there he was, the other day,
Beside Mæcenas at the play;
And at the Campus, just before,
They had a bout at battledore.'
Some chilling news through lane and street
Spreads from the Forum. All I meet
Accost me thus—'Dear friend, you're so
Close to the gods, that you must know:
About the Dacians, have you heard
Any fresh tidings? Not a word!'
'You're always jesting!' 'Now may all
The gods confound me, great and small,
If I have heard one word!' 'Well, well,
But you at any rate can tell,
If Cæsar means the lands, which he
Has promised to his troops, shall be
Selected from Italian ground,
Or in Trinacria be found?'
And when I swear, as well I can,
That I know nothing, for a man
Of silence rare and most discreet
They cry me up to all the street.
Thus do my wasted days slip by,
Not without many a wish and sigh,
When, when shall I the country see,
Its woodlands green,—oh, when be free,
With books of great old men, and sleep,
And hours of dreamy ease, to creep
Into oblivion sweet of life,

Its agitations and its strife ?*
When on my table shall be seen
Pythagoras's kinsman bean,
And bacon, not too fat, embellish
My dish of greens, and give it relish !
Oh happy nights, oh feasts divine,
When, with the friends I love, I dine
At mine own hearth-fire, and the meat
We leave gives my bluff hinds a treat !
No stupid laws our feasts control,
But each guest drains or leaves the bowl,
Precisely as he feels inclined.
If he be strong, and have a mind
For bumpers, good ! if not, he's free
To sip his liquor leisurely.
And then the talk our banquet rouses !
But not about our neighbours' houses,
Or if 'tis generally thought
That Lepos dances well or not ?†
But what concerns us nearer, and
Is harmful not to understand,
Whether by wealth or worth, 'tis plain,
That men to happiness attain ?

* Many have imitated this passage — none better than Cowley.

"Oh fountains ! when in you shall I
Myself, eased of unpeaceful thoughts, espy?
Oh fields ! oh woods ! when, when shall I be made
The happy tenant of your shade?
Here's the spring-head of pleasure's flood,
Where all the riches be, that she
Has coined and stamped for good."

How like is this to Tennyson's—

"You'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous, under a roof of pine."

By what we're led to choose our friends,—
Regard for them, or our own ends?
In what does good consist, and what
Is the supremest form of that?
And then friend Cervius will strike in
With some old grandam's tale, akin
To what we are discussing. Thus,
If some one have cried up to us
Arellius' wealth, forgetting how
Much care it costs him, 'Look you now,
Once on a time,' he will begin,
'A country mouse received within
His rugged cave a city brother,
As one old comrade would another.
"A frugal mouse upon the whole,
But loved his friend, and had a soul,"
And could be free and open-handed,
When hospitality demanded.
In brief, he did not spare his hoard
Of corn and pease, long coyly stored;
Raisins he brought, and scraps, to boot,
Half-gnawed, of bacon, which he put
With his own mouth before his guest,
In hopes, by offering his best
In such variety, he might
Persuade him to an appetite.
But still the cit, with languid eye,
Just picked a bit, then put it by;
Which with dismay the rustic saw,
As, stretched upon some stubbly straw,
He munched at bran and common grits,
Not venturing on the dainty bits.
At length the town mouse; "What," says he,
"My good friend, can the pleasure be,
Of grubbing here, on the backbone
Of a great crag with trees o'ergrown?

Who'd not to these wild woods prefer
The city, with its crowds and stir?
Then come with me to town; you'll ne'er
Regret the hour that took you there.
All earthly things draw mortal breath;
Nor great nor little can from death
Escape, and therefore, friend, be gay,
Enjoy life's good things while you may,
Remembering how brief the space
Allowed to you in any case."
His words strike home; and, light of heart,
Behold with him our rustic start,
Timing their journey so, they might
Reach town beneath the cloud of night,
Which was at its high noon, when they
To a rich mansion found their way,
Where shining ivory couches vied
With coverlets in purple dyed,
And where in baskets were amassed
The wrecks of a superb repast,
Which some few hours before had closed.
There, having first his friend disposed
Upon a purple tissue, straight
The city mouse begins to wait
With scraps upon his country brother,
Each scrap more dainty than another,
And all a servant's duty proffers,
First tasting everything he offers.
The guest, reclining there in state,
Rejoices in his altered fate,
O'er each fresh tidbit smacks his lips,
And breaks into the merriest quips,
When suddenly a banging door
Shakes host and guest into the floor.
From room to room they rush aghast,
And almost drop down dead at last.

When loud through all the house resounds
The deep bay of Molossian hounds.
"Ho!" cries the country mouse, "this kind
Of life is not for me, I find.
Give me my woods and cavern! There
At least I'm safe! And though both spare
And poor my food may be, rebel
I never will; so, fare ye well!"'"

It is characteristic of Horace that in the very next satire he makes his own servant Davus tell him that his rhapsodies about the country and its charms are mere humbug, and that, for all his ridicule of the shortcomings of his neighbours, he is just as inconstant as they are in his likings and dislikings. The poet in this way lets us see into his own little vanities, and secures the right by doing so to rally his friends for theirs. To his valet, at all events, by his own showing, he is no hero.

"You're praising up incessantly
The habits, manners, likings, ways,
Of people in the good old days;
Yet should some god this moment give
To you the power, like them to live,
You're just the man to say, 'I won't!'
Because in them you either don't
Believe, or else the courage lack,
The truth through thick and thin to back,
And, rather than its heights aspire,
Will go on sticking in the mire.
At Rome you for the country sigh;
When in the country to the sky
You, flighty as the thistle's down,
Are always crying up the town.
If no one asks you out to dine,

Oh, then the *pot-au-feu's* divine!
'You go out on compulsion only—
'Tis so delightful to be lonely;
And drinking bumpers is a bore
You shrink from daily more and more.'
But only let Mæcenas send
Command for you to meet a friend;
Although the message comes so late,
The lamps are being lighted, straight,
'Where's my pommade? Look sharp!' you shout,
'Heavens! is there nobody about?
Are you all deaf?' and, storming high
At all the household, off you fly.
When Milvius, and that set, anon
Arrive to dine, and find you gone,
With vigorous curses they retreat,
Which I had rather not repeat."

Who could take amiss the rebuke of the kindly satirist, who was so ready to show up his own weaknesses? In this respect our own great satirist Thackeray is very like him. Nor is this strange. They had many points in common—the same keen eye for human folly, the same tolerance for the human weaknesses of which they were so conscious in themselves, the same genuine kindness of heart. Thackeray's terse and vivid style, too, is probably in some measure due to this, that to him, as to Malherbe, Horace was a kind of breviary.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN ROME.—HORACE'S BORE.—EXTRAVAGANCE OF THE ROMAN DINNERS.

It is one of the many charms of Horace's didactic writings, that he takes us into the very heart of the life of Rome. We lounge with its loungers along the Via Sacra; we stroll into the Campus Martius, where young Hebrus with his noble horsemanship is witching the blushing Neobule, already too much enamoured of the handsome Liparian; and the men of the old school are getting up an appetite by games of tennis, bowls, or quoits; while the young Grecianised fops—lisping feeble jokes—saunter by with a listless contempt for such vulgar gymnastics. We are in the Via Appia. Bariné sweeps along in her chariot in superb toilette, shooting glances from her sleepy cruel eyes. The young fellows are all agaze. What is this? Young Pompilius, not three months married, bows to her, with a visible spasm at the heart, as she hurries by, full in view of his young wife, who hides her mortification within the curtains of her litter, and hastens home to solitude and tears. Here comes Barrus—as ugly a dog as any in Rome—dressed to death; and smiling Malvolio-smiles of self-com-

placency. The girls titter and exchange glances as he passes; Barrus swaggers on, feeling himself an inch taller in the conviction that he is slaughtering the hearts of the dear creatures by the score. A mule, with a dead boar thrown across it, now winds its way among the chariots and litters. A little ahead of it stalks Gargilius, attended by a strong force of retainers armed with spears and nets, enough to thin the game of the Hercynian forest. Little does the mighty hunter dream, that all his friends, who congratulate him on his success, are asking themselves and each other, where he bought the boar, and for how much? Have we never encountered a piscatory Gargilius near the Spey or the Tweed? We wander back into the city and its narrow streets. In one we are jammed into a doorway by a train of builders' waggons laden with huge blocks of stone, or massive logs of timber. Escaping these, we run against a line of undertakers' men, "performing" a voluminous and expensive funeral, to the discomfort of everybody and the impoverishment of the dead man's kindred. In the next street we run the risk of being crushed by some huge piece of masonry in the act of being swung by a crane into its place; and while calculating the chances of its fall with upturned eye, we find ourselves landed in the gutter by an unclean pig, which has darted between our legs at some attractive garbage beyond. This peril over, we encounter at the next turning a mad dog, who makes a passing snap at our toga as he darts into a neighbouring blind alley, whither we do not care to follow his vagaries among a covey

of young Roman street Arabs. Before we reach home a mumping beggar drops before us as we turn the corner, in a well-simulated fit of epilepsy or of helpless lameness. '*Quære peregrinum*'—"Try that game on country cousins,"—we mutter in our beard, and retreat to our lodgings on the third floor, encountering probably on the stair some half-tipsy artisan or slave, who is descending from the attics for another cup of fiery wine at the nearest wine-shop. We go to the theatre. The play is "Ilione," by Pacuvius; the scene a highly sensational one, where the ghost of Deiphobus, her son, appearing to Ilione, beseeches her to give his body burial. "Oh mother, mother," he cries, in tones most raucously tragic, "hear me call!" But the Kynaston of the day who plays Ilione has been soothing his maternal sorrow with too potent Falernian. He slumbers on. The populace, like the gods of our gallery, surmise the truth, and, "Oh! mother, mother, hear me call!" is bellowed from a thousand lungs. We are enjoying a comedy, when our friends the people, "the many-headed monster of the pit," begin to think it slow, and stop the performance with shouts for a show of bears or boxers. Or, hoping to hear a good play, we find the entertainment offered consists of pure spectacle, "inexplicable dumbshow and noise"—

> "Whole fleets of ships in long procession pass,
> And captive ivory follows captive brass." (C.)

A milk-white elephant or a camelopard is considered more than a substitute for character, incident,

or wit. And if an actor presents himself in a dress of unusual splendour, the house is in ecstasies, and a roar of applause, loud as a tempest in the Garganian forest, or as the surges on the Tuscan strand, makes the velarium vibrate above their heads. Human nature is perpetually repeating itself. So when Pope is paraphrasing Horace, he has no occasion to alter the facts, which were the same in his pseudo, as in the real, Augustan age, but only to modernise the names :—

"Loud as the waves on Orcas' stormy steep
Howl to the roarings of the Northern deep,
Such is the shout, the long-applauding note,
At Quin's high plume, or Oldfield's petticoat.
Booth enters—hark ! the universal peal.
'But has he spoken ?' Not a syllable.
'What shook the stage, and made the people stare ?'
'Cato's long wig, flowered gown, and lackered chair.'"

We dine out. Mæcenas is of the party, and comes in leaning heavily on the two *umbræ* (guests of his own inviting) whom he has brought with him,—*habitués* of what Augustus called his "parasitical table," who make talk and find buffoonery for him. He is out of spirits to-day, and more reserved than usual, for a messenger has just come in with bad news from Spain, or he has heard of a conspiracy against Augustus, which must be crushed before it grows more dangerous. Varius is there, and being a writer of tragedies, keeps up, as your tragic author is sure to do, a ceaseless fire of puns and pleasantry. At these young Sybaris smiles faintly, for his thoughts are away with his lady-love, the too fascinating Lydia. Horace—who, from

the other side of the table, with an amused smile in his eyes, watches him, as he "sighs like furnace," while Neæra, to the accompaniment of her lyre, sings one of Sappho's most passionate odes—whispers something in the ear of the brilliant vocalist, which visibly provokes a witty repartee, with a special sting in it for Horace himself, at which the little man winces—for have there not been certain love-passages of old between Neæra and himself? The wine circulates freely. Mæcenas warms, and drops, with the deliberation of a rich sonorous voice, now some sharp sarcasm, now some aphorism heavy with meaning, which sticks to the memory, like a saying of Talleyrand's. His *umbræ*, who have put but little of allaying Tiber in their cups, grow boisterous and abusive, and having insulted nearly everybody at the table by coarse personal banter, the party breaks up, and we are glad to get out with flushed cheeks and dizzy head into the cool air of an early summer night—all the more, that for the last half-hour young Piso at our elbow has been importuning us with whispered specimens of his very rickety elegiacs, and trying to settle an early appointment for us to hear him read the first six books of the great Epic with which he means to electrify the literary circles. We reach the Fabrician bridge, meditating as we go the repartees with which we might have turned the tables on those scurrilous followers of the great man, but did not. Suddenly we run up against a gentleman, who, raising his cloak over his head, is on the point of jumping into the Tiber. We seize him by his mantle,

and discover in the intended suicide an old acquaintance, equally well known to the Jews and the bric-a-brac shops, whose tastes for speculation and articles of *vertu* have first brought him to the money-lenders, next to the dogs, and finally to the brink of the yellow Tiber. We give him all the sesterces we have about us, along with a few sustaining aphorisms from our commonplace book upon the folly, if not the wickedness, of suicide, and see him safely home. When we next encounter the decayed *virtuoso*, he has grown a beard (very badly kept), and set up as a philosopher of the hyper-virtuous Jaques school. Of course he lectures us upon every vice which we have not, and every little frailty which we have, with a pointed asperity that upsets our temper for the day, and causes us long afterwards to bewail the evil hour in which we rescued such an ill-conditioned grumbler from the kindly waters of the river.

These hints of life and manners, all drawn from the pages of Horace, might be infinitely extended, and a ramble in the streets of Rome in the present day is consequently fuller of vivid interest to a man who has these pages at his fingers' ends than it can possibly be to any other person. Horace is so associated with all the localities, that one would think it the most natural thing in the world to come upon him at any turning. His old familiar haunts rise up about us out of the dust of centuries. We see a short thick-set man come sauntering along, "more fat than bard beseems." As he passes, lost in reverie, many turn round and look at him. Some point him out to their companions,

and by what they say, we learn that this is Horace, the favourite of Mæcenas, the frequent visitor at the unpretending palace of Augustus, the self-made man and famous poet. He is still within sight, when his progress is arrested. He is in the hands of a bore of the first magnitude. But what ensued, let us hear from his own lips (Satires, I. 9) :—

THE BORE.

It chanced that I, the other day,
Was sauntering up the Sacred Way,
And musing, as my habit is,
Some trivial random fantasies,
That for the time absorbed me quite,
When there comes running up a wight,
Whom only by his name I knew;
"Ha! my dear fellow, how d'ye do?"
Grasping my hand, he shouted. "Why,
As times go, pretty well," said I;
"And you, I trust, can say the same."
But after me as still he came,
"Sir, is there anything," I cried,
"You want of me?" "Oh," he replied,
"I'm just the man you ought to know;—
A scholar, author!" "Is it so?
For this I'll like you all the more!"
Then, writhing to evade the bore,
I quicken now my pace, now stop,
And in my servant's ear let drop
Some words, and all the while I feel
Bathed in cold sweat from head to heel.
"Oh, for a touch," I moaned, in pain,
"Bolanus, of thy madcap vein,
To put this incubus to rout!"
As he went chattering on about

Whatever he descries or meets,
The crowds, the beauty of the streets,
The city's growth, its splendour, size,
"You're dying to be off," he cries;
For all the while I'd been stock dumb.
"I've seen it this half-hour. But come,
Let's clearly understand each other;
It's no use making all this pother.
My mind's made up, to stick by you;
So where you go, there I go, too."
"Don't put yourself," I answered, "pray,
So very far out of your way.
I'm on the road to see a friend,
Whom you don't know, that's near his end,
Away beyond the Tiber far,
Close by where Cæsar's gardens are."
"I've nothing in the world to do,
And what's a paltry mile or two?
I like it, so I'll follow you!"
Down dropped my ears on hearing this,
Just like a vicious jackass's,
That's loaded heavier than he likes;
But off anew my torment strikes.
"If well I know myself, you'll end
With making of me more a friend
Than Viscus, ay, or Varius; for
Of verses who can run off more,
Or run them off at such a pace?
Who dance with such distinguished grace?
And as for singing, zounds!" said he,
"Hermogenes might envy me!"
Here was an opening to break in.
"Have you a mother, father, kin,
To whom your life is precious?" "None;—
I've closed the eyes of every one."
Oh, happy they, I inly groan.
Now I am left, and I alone.

Quick, quick, despatch me where I stand;
Now is the direful doom at hand,
Which erst the Sabine beldam old,
Shaking her magic urn, foretold
In days when I was yet a boy:
"Him shall no poisons fell destroy,
Nor hostile sword in shock of war,
Nor gout, nor colic, nor catarrh.
In fulness of the time his thread
Shall by a prate-apace be shred;
So let him, when he's twenty-one,
If he be wise, all babblers shun."
Now we were close to Vesta's fane,
'Twas hard on ten, and he, my bane,
Was bound to answer to his bail,
Or lose his cause if he should fail.
"Do, if you love me, step aside
One moment with me here!" he cried.
"Upon my life, indeed, I can't,
Of law I'm wholly ignorant;
And you know where I'm hurrying to."
"I'm fairly puzzled what to do.
Give you up, or my cause?" "Oh, me,
Me, by all means!" "I won't!" quoth he;
And stalks on, holding by me tight.
As with your conqueror to fight
Is hard, I follow. "How,"—anon
He rambles off,—"how get you on,
You and Mæcenas? To so few
He keeps himself. So clever, too!
No man more dexterous to seize
And use his opportunities.
Just introduce me, and you'll see,
We'd pull together famously;
And, hang me then, if, with my backing,
You don't send all your rivals packing!"

"Things in that quarter, sir, proceed
In very different style, indeed.
No house more free from all that's base;
In none cabals more out of place.
It hurts me not if others be
More rich, or better read than me.
Each has his place!" "Amazing tact!
Scarce credible!" "But 'tis the fact."
"You quicken my desire to get
An introduction to his set."
"With merit such as yours, you need
But wish it, and you must succeed.
He's to be won, and that is why
Of strangers he's so very shy."
"I'll spare no pains, no arts, no shifts!
His servants I'll corrupt with gifts.
To-day though driven from his gate,
What matter? I will lie in wait,
To catch some lucky chance; I'll meet
Or overtake him in the street;
I'll haunt him like his shadow. Nought
In life without much toil is bought."
Just at this moment who but my
Dear friend Aristius should come by?
My rattlebrain right well he knew.
We stop. "Whence, friends, and whither to?"
He asks and answers. Whilst we ran
The usual courtesies, I began
To pluck him by the sleeve, to pinch
His arms, that feel but will not flinch,
By nods and winks most plain to see
Imploring him to rescue me.
He, wickedly obtuse the while,
Meets all my signals with a smile.
I, choked with rage, said, "Was there not
Some business, I've forgotten what,

You mentioned, that you wished with me
To talk about, and privately?"
"Oh, I remember! Never mind!
Some more convenient time I'll find.
The Thirtieth Sabbath this! Would you
Affront the circumcisèd Jew?"
"Religious scruples I have none."
"Ah, but I have. I am but one
Of the *canaille*—a feeble brother.
Your pardon. Some fine day or other
I'll tell you what it was." Oh, day
Of woful doom to me! Away
The rascal bolted like an arrow,
And left me underneath the harrow;
When, by the rarest luck, we ran
At the next turn against the man,
Who had the lawsuit with my bore.
"Ha, knave!" he cried with loud uproar,
"Where are you off to? Will you here
Stand witness?" I present my ear.
To court he hustles him along;
High words are bandied, high and strong.
A mob collects, the fray to see:
So did Apollo rescue me.

The Satires appear to have been completed when Horace was about thirty-five years old, and published collectively, B.C. 29. By this time his position in society was well assured. He numbered among his friends, as we have seen, the most eminent men in Rome,—

"Chiefs out of war, and statesmen out of place"—

men who were not merely ripe scholars, but who had borne and were bearing a leading part in the great

actions of that memorable epoch. Among such men he would be most at home, for there his wit, his shrewdness, his genial spirits, and high breeding would be best appreciated. But his own keen relish of life, and his delight in watching the lights and shades of human character, took him into that wider circle where witty and notable men are always eagerly sought after to grace the feasts or enliven the heavy splendour of the rich and the unlettered. He was still young, and happy in the animal spirits which make the exhausting life of a luxurious capital endurable even in spite of its pleasures. What Victor Hugo calls

"Le banquet des amis, et quelquefois les soirs,
Le baiser jeune et frais d'une blanche aux yeux noirs,"

never quite lost their charm for him; but during this period they must often have tempted him into the elaborate dinners, the late hours, and the high-strung excitement, which made a retreat to the keen air and plain diet of his Sabine home scarcely less necessary for his body's than it was for his spirit's health. For, much as he prized moderation in all things, and extolled "the mirth that after no repenting draws," good wine, good company, and fair and witty women would be sure to work their spell on a temperament so bright and sympathetic, and to quicken his spirits into a brilliancy and force, dazzling for the hour, but to be paid for next day in headache and depression.

He was all the more likely to suffer in this way

from the very fact that, as a rule, he was simple and frugal in his tastes and habits. We have seen him (p. 66), in the early days of his stay in Rome, at his "plain meal of pancakes, pulse, and pease," served on homely earthenware. At his farm, again, beans and bacon (p. 80) form his staple dish. True to the old Roman taste, he was a great vegetarian, and in his charming ode, written for the opening of the temple of Apollo erected by Augustus on Mount Palatine (B.C. 28), he thinks it not out of place to mingle with his prayer for poetic power an entreaty that he may never be without wholesome vegetables and fruit.

> "Let olives, endive, mallows light,
> Be all my fare; and health
> Give thou, Apollo, so I might
> Enjoy my present wealth!
> Give me but these, I ask no more,
> These, and a mind entire—
> An old age, not unhonoured, nor
> Unsolaced by the lyre!"

Mæcenas himself is promised (Odes, III. 28), if he will visit the poet at the Sabine farm, "simple dinners neatly dressed;" and when Horace invites down his friend Torquatus (Epistles, II. 5), he does it on the footing that this wealthy lawyer shall be content to put up with plain vegetables and homely crockery (*modica olus omne patella*). The wine, he promises, shall be good, though not of any of the crack growths. If Torquatus wants better, he must send it down himself. The appointments of the table, too, though of the simplest kind, shall be admirably kept—

"The coverlets of faultless sheen,
The napkins scrupulously clean,
Your cup and salver such that they
Unto yourself yourself display."

Table-service neat to a nicety was obviously a great point with Horace. What plate he had was made to look its best. "*Ridet argento domus*"—"My plate, newly-burnished, enlivens my rooms"—is one of the attractions held out in his invitation to the fair Phyllis to grace his table on Mæcenas's birthday (Odes, IV. 11). And we may be very sure that his little dinners were served and waited on with the studied care and quiet finish of a refined simplicity. His rule on these matters is indicated by himself (Satires, II. 2):—

"The proper thing is to be cleanly and nice,
And yet so as not to be over precise;
To neither be constantly scolding your slaves,
Like that old prig Albutus, as losels and knaves,
Nor, like Nævius, in such things who's rather too easy,
To the guests at your board present water that's greasy."

To a man of these simple tastes the elaborate banquets, borrowed from the Asiatic Greeks, which were then in fashion, must have been intolerable. He has introduced us to one of them in describing a dinner-party of nine given by one Nasidienus, a wealthy snob, to Mæcenas and others of Horace's friends. The dinner breaks down in a very amusing way, between the giver's love of display and his parsimony, which prompted him, on the one hand, to present his guests

with the fashionable dainties, but, on the other, would not let him pay a price sufficient to secure their being good. The first course consists of a Lucanian wild boar, served with a garnish of turnips, radishes, and lettuce, in a sauce of anchovy-brine and wine-lees. Next comes an incongruous medley of dishes, including one

> "Of sparrows' gall and turbots' liver,
> At the mere thought of which I shiver."

A lamprey succeeds, "floating vast and free, by shrimps surrounded in a sea of sauce," and this is followed up by a crane soused in salt and flour, the liver of a snow-white goose fattened on figs, leverets' shoulders, and roasted blackbirds. This *menu* is clearly meant for a caricature, but it was a caricature of a prevailing folly, which had probably cost the poet many an indigestion.

Against this folly, and the ruin to health and purse which it entailed, some of his most vigorous satire is directed. It furnishes the themes of the second and fourth Satires of the Second Book, both of which, with slight modifications, might with equal truth be addressed to the dinner-givers and diners-out of our own day. In the former of these the speaker is the Apulian yeoman Ofellus, who undertakes to show

> "What the virtue consists in, and why it is great,
> To live on a little, whatever your state."

Before entering on his task, however, he insists that his hearers shall cut themselves adrift from their luxuries, and come to him fasting, and with appetites

whetted by a sharp run with the hounds, a stiff bout at tennis, or some other vigorous gymnastics ;—

"And when the hard work has your squeamishness routed,
When you're parched up with thirst, and your hunger's undoubted,
Then spurn simple food if you can, or plain wine,
Which no honied gums from Hymettus refine."

His homily then proceeds in terms which would not be out of place if addressed to a *gourmet* of modern London or Paris :—

"When your butler's away, and the weather's so bad
That there is not a morsel of fish to be had,
A crust with some salt will soothe not amiss
The ravening stomach. You ask, how is this ?
Because for delight, at the best, you must look
To yourself, and not to your wealth or your cook.*
Work till you perspire. Of all sauces 'tis best.
The man that's with over-indulgence oppressed,
White-livered and pursy, can relish no dish,
Be it ortolans, oysters, or finest of fish.
Still I scarcely can hope, if before you there were
A peacock and capon, you would not prefer
With the peacock to tickle your palate, you're so
Completely the dupes of mere semblance and show.
For to buy the rare bird only gold will avail,
And he makes a grand show with his fine painted tail.

* "Pour l'amour de Dieu, un sou pour acheter un petit pain. J'ai si faim !" "Comment !" responded the cloyed sensualist, in search of an appetite, who was thus accosted; "tu as faim, petit drôle ! Tu es bien heureux !" The readers of Pope will also remember his lines on the man who

"Called 'happy dog' the beggar at his door,
And envied thirst and hunger to the poor."

As if this had to do with the matter the least!
Can you make of the feathers you prize so a feast?
And, when the bird's cooked, what becomes of its splendour?
Is his flesh than the capon's more juicy or tender?
Mere appearance, not substance, then, clearly it is,
Which bamboozles your judgment. So much, then, for this."

Don't talk to me of taste, Ofellus continues—

"Will it give you a notion
If this pike in the Tiber was caught, or the ocean?
If it used 'twixt the bridges to glide and to quiver,
Or was tossed to and fro at the mouth of the river?"

Just as our epicures profess to distinguish by flavour a salmon fresh run from the sea from one that has been degenerating for four-and-twenty hours in the fresh water of the river—with this difference, however, that, unlike the salmon with us, the above-bridge pike was considered at Rome to be more delicate than his sea-bred and leaner brother.

Ofellus next proceeds to ridicule the taste which prizes what is set before it for mere size or rarity or cost. It is this, he contends, and not any excellence in the things themselves, which makes people load their tables with the sturgeon or the stork. Fashion, not flavour, prescribes the rule; indeed, the more perverted her ways, the more sure they are to be followed.

"So were any one now to assure us a treat
In cormorants roasted, as tender and sweet,
The young men of Rome are so prone to what's wrong,
They'd eat cormorants all to a man, before long."

But, continues Ofellus, though I would have you frugal, I would not have you mean—

> " One vicious extreme it is idle to shun,
> If into its opposite straightway you run ;"

illustrating his proposition by one of those graphic sketches which give a distinctive life to Horace's Satires.

" There is Avidienus, to whom, like a burr,
Sticks the name he was righteously dubbed by, of 'Cur,'
Eats beechmast and olives five years old, at least,
And even when he's robed all in white for a feast
On his marriage or birth day, or some other very
High festival day, when one likes to be merry,
What wine from the chill of his cellar emerges—
'Tis a drop at the best—has the flavour of verjuice ;
While from a huge cruet his own sparing hand
On his coleworts drops oil which no mortal can stand,
So utterly loathsome and rancid in smell, it
Defies his stale vinegar even to quell it."

Let what you have be simple, the best of its kind, whatever that may be, and served in the best style. And now learn, continues the rustic sage,

" In what way and how greatly you'll gain
By using a diet both sparing and plain.
First, your health will be good ; for you readily can
Believe how much mischief is done to a man
By a great mass of dishes,—remembering that
Plain fare of old times, and how lightly it sat.
But the moment you mingle up boiled with roast meat,
And shellfish with thrushes, what tasted so sweet
Will be turned into bile, and ferment, not digest, in
Your stomach exciting a tumult intestine.

Mark, from a bewildering dinner how pale
Every man rises up! Nor is this all they ail,
For the body, weighed down by its last night's excesses,
To its own wretched level the mind, too, depresses,
And to earth chains that spark of the essence divine;
While he, that's content on plain viands to dine,
Sleeps off his fatigues without effort, then gay
As a lark rises up to the tasks of the day.
Yet he on occasion will find himself able
To enjoy without hurt a more liberal table,
Say, on festival days, that come round with the year,
Or when his strength's low, and cries out for good cheer,
Or when, as years gather, his age must be nursed
With more delicate care than he wanted at first.
But for you, when ill health or old age shall befall,
Where's the luxury left, the relief within call,
Which has not been forestalled in the days of your prime,
When you scoffed, in your strength, at the inroads of time?
"'Keep your boar till it's rank!' said our sires; which arose,
I am confident, not from their having no nose,
But more from the notion that some of their best
Should be kept in reserve for the chance of a guest:
And though, ere he came, it grew stale on the shelf,
This was better than eating all up by one's self.
Oh, would I had only on earth found a place
In the days of that noble heroic old race!"

So much as a question of mere health and good feeling. But now our moralist appeals to higher considerations:—

"Do you set any store by good name, which we find
Is more welcome than song to the ears of mankind?
Magnificent turbot, plate richly embossed,
Will bring infinite shame with an infinite cost.

Add kinsmen and neighbours all furious, your own
Disgust with yourself, when you find yourself groan
For death, which has shut itself off from your hope,
With not even a sou left to buy you a rope.
"'Most excellent doctrine!' you answer, 'and would,
For people like Trausius, be all very good;
But I have great wealth, and an income that brings
In enough to provide for the wants of three kings.'
But is this any reason you should not apply
Your superfluous wealth to ends nobler, more high?
You so rich, why should any good honest man lack?
Our temples, why should they be tumbling to wrack?
Wretch, of all this great heap have you nothing to spare
For our dear native land? Or why should you dare
To think that misfortune will never o'ertake you?
Oh, then, what a butt would your enemies make you!
Who will best meet reverses? The man who, you find,
Has by luxuries pampered both body and mind?
Or he who, contented with little, and still
Looking on to the future, and fearful of ill,
Long, long ere a murmur is heard from afar,
In peace has laid up the munitions of war?"

Alas for the wisdom of Ofellus the sage! Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and the spectacle is still before us of the same selfishness, extravagance, and folly, which he rebuked so well and so vainly, but pushed to even greater excess, and more widely diffused, enervating the frames and ruining the fortunes of one great section of society, and helping to inspire another section, and that a dangerous one, with angry disgust at the hideous contrast between the opposite extremes of wretchedness and luxury which everywhere meets the eye in the great cities of the civilised world.

In the fourth Satire of the Second Book, Horace

ridicules, in a vein of exquisite irony, the *gourmets* of his day, who made a philosophy of flavours, with whom sauces were a science, and who had condensed into aphorisms the merits of the poultry, game, or fish of the different and often distant regions from which they were brought to Rome. Catius has been listening to a dissertation by some Brillât-Savarin of this class, and is hurrying home to commit to his tablets the precepts by which he professes himself to have been immensely struck, when he is met by Horace, and prevailed upon to repeat some of them in the very words of this philosopher of the dinner-table. Exceedingly curious they are, throwing no small light both upon the materials of the Roman cuisine and upon the treatment by the Romans of their wines. Being delivered, moreover, with the epigrammatic precision of philosophical axioms, their effect is infinitely amusing. Thus:—

> "Honey Aufidius mixed with strong
> Falernian; he was very wrong."
>
> "The flesh of kid is rarely fine,
> That has been chiefly fed on vine."
>
> "To meadow mushrooms give the prize,
> And trust no others, if you're wise."
>
> "Till I had the example shown,
> The art was utterly unknown
> Of telling, when you taste a dish,
> The age and kind of bird or fish."

Horace professes to be enraptured at the depth of sagacity and beauty of expression in what he hears, and exclaims,—

"Oh, learned Catius, prithee, by
Our friendship, by the gods on high,
Take me along with you, to hear
Such wisdom, be it far or near!
For though you tell me all—in fact,
Your memory is most exact—
Still there must be some grace of speech,
Which no interpreter can reach.
The look, too, of the man, the mien!
Which you, what fortune! having seen,
May for that very reason deem
Of no account; but to the stream,
Even at its very fountain-head,
I fain would have my footsteps led,
That, stooping, I may drink my fill,
Where such life-giving saws distil."

Manifestly the poet was no gastronome, or he would not have dealt thus sarcastically with matters so solemn and serious as the gusts, and flavours, and "sacred rage" of a highly-educated appetite. At the same time, there is no reason to suppose him to have been insensible to the attractions of the "*haute cuisine*," as developed by the genius of the Vattel or Francatelli of Mæcenas, and others of his wealthy friends. Indeed, he appears to have been prone, rather than otherwise, to attack these with a relish, which his feeble digestion had frequent reason to repent. His servant Davus more than hints as much in the passage above quoted (p. 83); and the consciousness of his own frailty may have given additional vigour to his assaults on the ever-increasing indulgence in the pleasures of the table, which he saw gaining ground so rapidly around him.

CHAPTER VI.

HORACE'S LOVE POETRY.

When young, Horace threw himself ardently into the pleasures of youth; and his friends being, for the most part, young and rich, their banquets were sure to be sumptuous, and carried far into the night. Nor in these days did the "*blanche aux yeux noirs*," whose beauty and accomplishments formed the crowning grace of most bachelors' parties, fail to engage a liberal share of his attention. He tells us as much himself (Epistles, I. 14), when contrasting to the steward of his farm the tastes of his maturer years with the habits of his youth.

> "He, whom fine clothes became, and glistering hair,
> Whom Cinara welcomed, that rapacious fair,
> As well you know, for his own simple sake,
> Who on from noon would wine in bumpers take,
> Now quits the table soon, and loves to dream
> And drowse upon the grass beside a stream,"

adding, with a sententious brevity which it is hopeless to imitate, "*Nec lusisse pudet, sed non incidere ludum*,—

"Nor blushes that of sport he took his fill;
He'd blush, indeed, to be tomfooling still."

Again, when lamenting how little the rolling years have left him of his past (Epistles, II. 2), his regrets are for the "*Venerem, convivia, ludum*," to which he no longer finds himself equal—

"Years following years steal something every day,
Love, feasting, frolic, fun, they've swept away;"—

and to the first of these, life "in his hot youth" manifestly owed much of its charm.

To beauty he would appear to have been always susceptible, but his was the lightly-stirred susceptibility which is an affair of the senses rather than of the soul. "There is in truth," says Rochefoucauld, "only one kind of love; but there are a thousand different copies of it." Horace, so far at least as we can judge from his poetry, was no stranger to the spurious form of the passion, but his whole being had never been penetrated by the genuine fire. The goddess of his worship is not Venus Urania, pale, dreamy, spiritual, but *Erycina ridens, quam Jocus circum volat et Cupido*, who comes

"With laughter in her eyes, and Love
And Glee around her flying."

Accordingly, of all those infinitely varied chords of deep emotion and imaginative tenderness, of which occasional traces are to be found in the literature of antiquity, and with which modern poetry, from Dante to Tennyson, is familiar, no hint is to be found in his

pages. His deepest feeling is at best but a ferment of the blood; it is never the all-absorbing devotion of the heart. He had learned by his own experience just enough of the tender passion to enable him to write pretty verses about it, and to rally, not unsympathetically, such of his friends as had not escaped so lightly from the flame. Therefore it is that, as has been truly said, "his love-ditties are, as it were, like flowers, beautiful in form and rich in hues, but without the scent that breathes to the heart." We seek in them in vain for the tenderness, the negation of self, the passion and the pathos, which are the soul of all true love-poetry.

At the same time, Horace had a subtle appreciation of the beauty and grace, the sweetness and the fascination, of womanhood. Poet as he was, he must have delighted to contemplate the ideal elevation and purity of woman, as occasionally depicted in the poetry of Greece, and of which he could scarcely fail to have had some glimpses in real life. Nay, he paints (Odes, III. 11) the devotion of Hypermnestra for her husband's sake "magnificently false" (*splendide mendax*) to the promise which, with her sister Danaids, she had given to her father, in a way that proves he was not incapable of appreciating, and even of depicting, the purer and higher forms of female worth. But this exquisite portrait stands out in solitary splendour among the Lydes and Lalages, the Myrtales, Phrynes, and Glyceras of his other poems. These ladies were types of the class with which, probably, he was most familiar, those brilliant and accomplished *hetairæ*,

generally Greeks, who were trained up in slavery with every art and accomplishment which could heighten their beauty or lend a charm to their society. Always beautiful, and by force of their very position framed to make themselves attractive, these "weeds of glorious feature," naturally enough, took the chief place in the regards of men of fortune, in a state of society where marriage was not an affair of the heart but of money or connection, and where the wife so chosen seems to have been at pains to make herself more attractive to everybody rather than to her husband. Here and there these Aspasias made themselves a distinguished position, and occupied a place with their protector nearly akin to that of wife. But in the ordinary way their reign over any one heart was shortlived, and their career, though splendid, was brief,—a youth of folly, a premature old age of squalor and neglect. Their habits were luxurious and extravagant. In dress they outvied the splendour, not insignificant, of the Roman matrons; and they might be seen courting the admiration of the wealthy loungers of Rome by dashing along the Appian Way behind a team of spirited ponies driven by themselves. These things were often paid for out of the ruin of their admirers. Their society, while in the bloom and freshness of their charms, was greatly sought after, for wit and song came with them to the feast. Even Cicero, then well up in years, finds a pleasant excuse (Familiar Letters, IX. 26) for enjoying till a late hour the society of one Cytheris, a lady of the class, at the house of Volumnius Eutrapelus, her protector. His friend

Atticus was with him; and although Cicero finds some excuse necessary, it is still obvious that even grave and sober citizens might dine in such equivocal company without any serious compromise of character.

It was perhaps little to be wondered at that Horace did not squander his heart upon women of this class. His passions were too well controlled, and his love of ease too strong, to admit of his being carried away by the headlong impulses of a deeply-seated devotion. This would probably have been the case even had the object of his passion been worthy of an unalloyed regard. As it was,

> "His loves were like most other loves,
> A little glow, a little shiver;"

and if he sometimes had, like the rest of mankind, to pay his homage to the universal passion by "sighing upon his midnight pillow" for the regards of a mistress whom he could not win, or who had played him false, he was never at a loss to find a balm for his wounds elsewhere. He was not the man to nurse the bitter-sweet sorrows of the heart—to write, and to feel, like Burns—

> "'Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
> Than aught in the world beside."

Parabilem amo Venerem facilemque, "Give me the beauty that is not too coy," is the Alpha and Omega of his personal creed. How should it have been otherwise? Knowing woman chiefly, as he obviously did, only in the ranks of the *demi-monde*, he was not

likely to regard the fairest face, after the first heyday of his youth was past, as worth the pain its owner's caprices could inflict. For, as seen under that phase, woman was apt to be both mercenary and capricious; and if the poet suffered, as he did, from the fickleness of more than one mistress, the probability is—and this he was too honest not to feel—that they had only forestalled him in inconstancy.

If Horace ever had a feeling which deserved the name of love, it was for the Cinara mentioned in the lines above quoted. She belonged to the class of hetairæ, but seems to have preferred him, from a genuine feeling of affection, to her wealthier lovers. Holding him as she did completely under her thraldom, it was no more than natural that she should have played with his emotions, keeping him between ecstasy and torture, as such a woman, especially if her own heart were also somewhat engaged, would delight to do with a man in whose love she must have rejoiced as something to lean upon amid the sad frivolities of her life. The exquisite pain to which her caprices occasionally subjected him was more than he could bear in silence, and drove him, despite his quick sense of the ridiculous, into lachrymose avowals to Mæcenas of his misery over his wine, which were, doubtless, no small source of amusement to the easy-going statesman, before his wife Terentia had taught him by experience what infinite torture a charming and coquettish woman has it in her power to inflict. Long years afterwards, when he is well on to fifty, Horace reminds his friend (Epistles, I. 7) of

"The woes blabbed o'er our wine, when Cinara chose
To tease me, cruel flirt—ah, happy woes!"—

words in which lurks a subtle undercurrent of pathos, like that in Sophie Arnould's exclamation in Le Brun's Epigram,—

"Oh, le bon temps! J'etais bien malheureuse!"

Twice also in his later odes (IV. 1 and 13), Horace recurs with tenderness to the "gentle Cinara" as having held the paramount place in his heart. She was his one bit of romance, and this all the more that she died young. *Cinaræ breves annos fata dederunt*—"Few years the fates to Cinara allowed;" and in his meditative rambles by the Digentia, the lonely poet, we may well believe, often found himself sighing "for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still."

In none of his love-poems is the ring of personal feeling more perceptible than in the following. It is one of his earliest, and if we are to identify the Neæra to whom it is addressed with the Neæra referred to in Ode 14, Book III., it must have been written *Consule Planco*, that is, in the year of Horace's return to Rome after the battle of Philippi.—

"'Twas night!—let me recall to thee that night!
The silver moon in the unclouded sky
Amid the lesser stars was shining bright,
When, in the words I did adjure thee by,
Thou with thy clinging arms, more tightly knit
Around me than the ivy clasps the oak,
Didst breathe a vow—mocking the gods with it—
A vow which, false one, thou hast foully broke;

That while the ravening wolf should hunt the flocks,
The shipman's foe, Orion, vex the sea,
And zephyrs waft the unshorn Apollo's locks,
So long wouldst thou be fond, be true to me!

"Yet shall thy heart, Neæra, bleed for this,
For if in Flaccus aught of man remain,
Give thou another joys that once were his,
Some other maid more true shall soothe his pain;
Nor think again to lure him to thy heart!
The pang once felt, his love is past recall;
And thou, more favoured youth, whoe'er thou art,
Who revell'st now in triumph o'er his fall,
Though thou be rich in land and golden store,
In lore a sage, with shape framed to beguile,
Thy heart shall ache when, this brief fancy o'er,
She seeks a new love, and I calmly smile."

This is the poetry of youth, the passion of wounded vanity; but it is clearly the product of a strong personal feeling—a feeling which has more often found expression in poetry than the higher emotions of those with whom "love is love for evermore," and who have infinite pity, but no rebuke, for faithlessness. The lines have been often imitated; and in Sir Robert Aytoun's poem on "Woman's Inconstancy," the imitation has a charm not inferior to the original.

"Yet do thou glory in thy choice,
Thy choice of his good fortune boast;
I'll neither grieve nor yet rejoice
To see him gain what I have lost;
The height of my disdain shall be
To laugh at him, to blush for thee;
To love thee still, yet go no more
A-begging to a beggar's door."

Note how Horace deals with the same theme in his Ode to Pyrrha, famous in Milton's overrated translation, and the difference between the young man writing under the smart of wounded feeling and the poet, calmly though intensely elaborating his subject as a work of art, becomes at once apparent.

"Pyrrha, what slender boy, in perfume steeped,
Doth in the shade of some delightful grot
Caress thee now on couch with roses heaped?
For whom dost thou thine amber tresses knot

"With all thy seeming-artless grace? Ah me,
How oft will he thy perfidy bewail,
And joys all flown, and shudder at the sea
Rough with the chafing of the blust'rous gale,

"Who now, fond dreamer, revels in thy charms;
Who, all unweeting how the breezes veer,
Hopes still to find a welcome in thine arms
As warm as now, and thee as loving-dear!

"Ah, woe for those on whom thy spell is flung!
My votive tablet, in the temple set,
Proclaims that I to ocean's god have hung
The vestments in my shipwreck smirched and wet."

It may be that among Horace's odes some were directly inspired by the ladies to whom they are addressed; but it is time that modern criticism should brush away all the elaborate nonsense which has been written to demonstrate that Pyrrha, Chloe, Lalage, Lydia, Lyde, Leuconoë, Tyndaris, Glycera, and Barine, not to mention others, were real personages to whom the poet was attached. At this rate his occupations

must have rather been those of a Don Giovanni than of a man of studious habits and feeble health, who found it hard enough to keep pace with the milder dissipations of the social circle. We are absolutely without any information as to these ladies, whose liquid and beautiful names are almost poems in themselves; nevertheless the most wonderful romances have been spun about them out of the inner consciousness of the commentators. Who would venture to deal in this way with the Eleanore, and "rare pale Margaret," and Cousin Amy, of Mr Tennyson? And yet to do so would be quite as reasonable as to conclude, as some critics have done, that such a poem as the following (Odes, I. 23) was not a graceful poetical exercise merely, but a serious appeal to the object of a serious passion:—

"Nay, hear me, dearest Chloe, pray!
You shun me like a timid fawn,
That seeks its mother all the day
By forest brake and upland lawn,
Of every passing breeze afraid,
And leaf that twitters in the glade.

"Let but the wind with sudden rush
The whispers of the wood awake,
Or lizard green disturb the hush,
Quick-darting through the grassy brake,
The foolish frightened thing will start,
With trembling knees and beating heart.*

* The same idea has been beautifully worked out by Spenser, in whom, and in Milton, the influence of Horace's poetry is perhaps more frequently traceable than in any of our poets:—

"Like as an hynde forth singled from the herde,
That hath escapèd from a ravenous beast,

"But I am neither lion fell
Nor tiger grim to work you woe;
I love you, sweet one, much too well,
Then cling not to your mother so,
But to a lover's fonder arms
Confide your ripe and rosy charms."

Such a poem as this, one should have supposed, might have escaped the imputation of being dictated by mere personal desire. But no; even so acute a critic as Walckenaer will have it that Chloe was one of Horace's many mistresses, to whom he fled for consolation when Lydia, another of them, played him false, "et qu'il l'a recherchée avec empressement." And his sole ground for this conclusion is the circumstance that a Chloe is mentioned in this sense in the famous Dialogue, in which Horace and Lydia have quite gratuitously been assumed to be the speakers. That is to say, he first assumes that the dialogue is not a mere exercise of fancy, but a serious fact, and, having got so far, concludes as a matter of course that the Chloe of the one ode is the Chloe of the other! "The ancients," as Buttmann has well said, "had the skill to construct such poems so that each speech tells us by whom it is spoken; but we let the editors treat us all our lives as school-

Yet flies away, of her own feet afearde;
And every leaf, that shaketh with the least
Murmure of winde, her terror hath encreast;
So fled fayre Florimel from her vaine feare,
Long after she from perill was releast;
Each shade she saw, and each noyse she did heare,
Did seeme to be the same, which she escaypt whileare."
–Fairy Queen, III. vii. 1.

boys, and interline such dialogues, as we do our plays, with the names. Even in an English poem we should be offended at seeing Collins by the side of Phyllis." Read without the prepossession which the constant mention of it as a dialogue between Horace and Lydia makes it difficult to avoid, the Ode commends itself merely as a piece of graceful fancy. Real feeling is the last thing one looks for in two such excessively well-bred and fickle personages as the speakers. Their pouting and reconciliation make very pretty fooling, such as might be appropriate in the wonderful beings who people the garden landscapes of Watteau. But where are the fever and the strong pulse of passion which, in less ethereal mortals, would be proper to such a theme? Had there been a real lady in the case, the tone would have been less measured, and the strophes less skilfully balanced.

"He.—Whilst I was dear and thou wert kind,
And I, and I alone, might lie
Upon thy snowy breast reclined,
Not Persia's king so blest as I.

She.—Whilst I to thee was all in all,
Nor Chloë might with Lydia vie,
Renowned in ode or madrigal,
Not Roman Ilia famed as I.

He.—I now am Thracian Chloë's slave,
With hand and voice that charms the air,
For whom even death itself I'd brave,
So fate the darling girl would spare!

SHE.—I dote on Calaïs—and I
Am all his passion, all his care,
For whom a double death I'd die,
So fate the darling boy would spare!

HE.—What, if our ancient love return,
And bind us with a closer tie,
If I the fair-haired Chloë spurn,
And as of old, for Lydia sigh?

SHE.—Though lovelier than yon star is he,
And lighter thou than cork—ah why?
More churlish, too, than Adria's sea,
With thee I'd live, with thee I'd die!"

In this graceful trifle Horace is simply dealing with one of the commonplaces of poetry, most probably only transplanting a Greek flower into the Latin soil. There is more of the vigour of originality and of living truth in the following ode to Bariné (II. 8), where he gives us a cameo portrait, carved with exquisite finish, of that *beauté de diable*, "dallying and dangerous," as Charles Lamb called Peg Woffington's, and, what hers was not, heartless, which never dies out of the world. A real person, Lord Lytton thinks, "was certainly addressed, and in a tone which, to such a person, would have been the most exquisite flattery; and as certainly the person is not so addressed by a lover" —a criticism which, coming from such an observer, outweighs the opposite conclusions of a score of pedantic scholars:—

"If for thy perjuries and broken truth,
Bariné, thou hadst ever come to harm,
Hadst lost, but in a nail or blackened tooth,
One single charm,

"I'd trust thee; but when thou art most forsworn,
Thou blazest forth with beauty most supreme,
And of our young men art, noon, night, and morn,
The thought, the dream.

"To thee 'tis gain thy mother's dust to mock,
To mock the silent watchfires of the night,
All heaven, the gods, on whom death's icy shock
Can never light.

"Smiles Venus' self, I vow, to see thy arts,
The guileless Nymphs and cruel Cupid smile,
And, smiling, whets on bloody stone his darts
Of fire the while.

"Nay more, our youth grow up to be thy prey,
New slaves throng round, and those who crouched at first,
Though oft they threaten, leave not for a day
Thy roof accurst.

"Thee mothers for their unfledged younglings dread;
Thee niggard old men dread, and brides new-made,
In misery, lest their lords neglect their bed,
By thee delayed."

Horace is more at home in playful raillery of the bewildering effects of love upon others, than in giving expression to its emotions as felt by himself. In the fourteenth Epode, it is true, he begs Mæcenas to excuse his failure to execute some promised poem, because he is so completely upset by his love for a certain naughty Phryne that he cannot put a couple of lines together. Again, he tells us (Odes, I. 19) into what a ferment his whole being has been thrown, long after he had thought himself safe from such

emotions, by the marble-like sheen of Glycera's beauty —her *grata protervitas, et voltus nimium lubricus adspici*—

> "Her pretty, pert, provoking ways,
> And face too fatal-fair to see."

The first Ode of the Fourth Book is a beautiful fantasia on a similar theme. He paints, too, the tortures of jealousy with the vigour (Odes, I. 13) of a man who knew something of them :—

> "Then reels my brain, then on my cheek
> The shifting colour comes and goes,
> And tears, that flow unbidden, speak
> The torture of my inward throes,
> The fierce unrest, the deathless flame,
> That slowly macerates my frame."

And when rallying his friend Tibullus (Odes, I. 23) about his doleful ditties on the fickleness of his mistress Glycera, he owns to having himself suffered terribly in the same way. But despite all this, it is very obvious that if love has, in Rosalind's phrase, "clapped him on the shoulder," the little god left him "heart-whole." Being, as it is, the source of the deepest and strongest emotions, love presents many aspects for the humorist, and perhaps to no one more than to him who has felt it intensely. Horace may or may not have sounded the depths of the passion in his own person ; but, in any case, a fellow-feeling for the lover's pleasures and pains served to infuse a tone of kindliness into his ridicule. How charming in this way is the Ode to Lydia (I. 8), of which the late Henry Luttrel's

once popular and still delightful 'Letters to Julia' is an elaborate paraphrase!—

"Why, Lydia, why,
I pray, by all the gods above,
Art so resolved that Sybaris should die,
And all for love?

"Why doth he shun
The Campus Martius' sultry glare?
He that once recked of neither dust nor sun,
Why rides he there,

"First of the brave,
Taming the Gallic steed no more?
Why doth he shrink from Tiber's yellow wave?
Why thus abhor

"The wrestlers' oil,
As 'twere from viper's tongue distilled?
Why do his arms no livid bruises soil,
He, once so skilled,

"The disc or dart
Far, far beyond the mark to hurl?
And tell me, tell me, in what nook apart,
Like baby-girl,

"Lurks the poor boy,
Veiling his manhood, as did Thetis' son,
To 'scape war's bloody clang, while fated Troy
Was yet undone?"

In the same class with this poem may be ranked the following ode (I. 27). Just as the poet has made us as familiar with the lovelorn Sybaris as if we knew him, so does he here transport us into the middle

of a wine-party of young Romans, with that vivid dramatic force which constitutes one great source of the excellence of his lyrics.

"Hold! hold! 'Tis for Thracian madmen to fight
With wine-cups, that only were made for delight.
'Tis barbarous—brutal! I beg of you all,
Disgrace not our banquet with bloodshed and brawl!

"Sure, Median scimitars strangely accord
With lamps and with wine at the festival board!
'Tis out of all rule! Friends, your places resume,
And let us have order once more in the room!

"If I am to join you in pledging a beaker
Of this stout Falernian, choicest of liquor,
Megilla's fair brother must say, from what eyes
Flew the shaft, sweetly fatal, that causes his sighs.

"How—dumb! Then I drink not a drop. Never blush,
Whoever the fair one may be, man! Tush, tush!
She'll do your taste credit, I'm certain—for yours
Was always select in its little amours.

"Don't be frightened! We're all upon honour, you know,
So out with your tale!—Gracious powers! Is it so?
Poor fellow! Your lot has gone sadly amiss,
When you fell into such a Charybdis as this!

"What witch, what magician, with drinks and with charms,
What god can effect your release from her harms?
So fettered, scarce Pegasus' self, were he near you,
From the fangs of this triple Chimæra would clear you."

In this poem, which has all the effect of an impromptu, we have a *genre* picture of Roman life, as vivid as though painted by the pencil of Couture or Gerôme.

Serenades were as common an expedient among the Roman gallants of the days of Augustus as among their modern successors. In the fine climate of Greece, Italy, and Spain, they were a natural growth, and involved no great strain upon a wooer's endurance. They assume a very different aspect under a northern sky, where young Absolute, found by his Lydia Languish "in the garden, in the coldest night in January, stuck like a dripping statue," presents a rather lugubrious spectacle. Horace (Odes, III. 7) warns the fair Asterië, during the absence of her husband abroad, to shut her ears against the musical nocturnes of a certain Enipeus :—

> "At nightfall shut your doors, nor then
> Look down into the street again,
> When quavering fifes complain;"

using almost the words of Shylock to his daughter Jessica :—

> "Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum
> *And the vile squeaking of the wrynecked fife,*
> Clamber not you up to the casement then,
> Nor thrust your head into the public street."

The name given to such a serenade, adopted probably, with the serenades themselves, from Greece, was *paraclausithyron*—literally, an out-of-door lament. Here is a specimen of what they were (Odes, III. 10), in which, under the guise of imitating their form, Horace quietly makes a mock of the absurdity of the practice. His serenader has none of the insensibility to the elements of the lover in the Scotch song :—

"Wi' the sleet in my hair, I'd gang ten miles and mair,
For a word o' that sweet lip o' thine, o' thine,
For ae glance o' thy dark e'e divine."

Neither is there in his pleading the tone of earnest entreaty which marks the wooer, in a similar plight, of Burns's "Let me in this ae nicht"—

"Thou hear'st the winter wind and weet,
Nae star blinks through the driving sleet;
Tak pity on my weary feet,
And shield me frae the rain, jo."

There can be no mistake as to the seriousness of this appeal. Horace's is a mere *jeu-d'esprit*:—

"Though your drink were Tanais, chillest of rivers,
And your lot with some conjugal savage were cast,
You would pity, sweet Lycè, the poor soul that shivers
Out here at your door in the merciless blast.

"Only hark how the doorway goes straining and creaking,
And the piercing wind pipes through the trees that surround
The court of your villa, while black frost is streaking
With ice the crisp snow that lies thick on the ground!

"In your pride—Venus hates it—no longer envelop ye,
Or haply you'll find yourself laid on the shelf;
You never were made for a prudish Penelope,
'Tis not in the blood of your sires or yourself.

"Though nor gifts nor entreaties can win a soft answer,
Nor the violet pale of my love-ravaged cheek,
To your husband's intrigue with a Greek ballet-dancer,
Though you still are blind, and forgiving and meek;

"Yet be not as cruel—forgive my upbraiding—
As snakes, nor as hard as the toughest of oak;
To stand out here, drenched to the skin, serenading
All night may in time prove too much of a joke."

It is not often that Horace's poetry is vitiated by bad taste. Strangely enough, almost the only instances of it occur where he is writing of women, as in the Ode to Lydia (Book I. 25) and to Lyce (Book IV. 13). Both ladies seem to have been former favourites of his, and yet the burden of these poems is exultation in the decay of their charms. The deadening influence of mere sensuality, and of the prevalent low tone of morals, must indeed have been great, when a man "so singularly susceptible," as Lord Lytton has truly described him, "to amiable, graceful, gentle, and noble impressions of man and of life," could write of a woman whom he had once loved in a strain like this:—

"The gods have heard, the gods have heard my prayer;
Yes, Lyce! you are growing old, and still
You struggle to look fair;
You drink, and dance, and trill
Your songs to youthful love, in accents weak
With wine, and age, and passion. Youthful Love!
He dwells in Chia's cheek,
And hears her harp-strings move.
Rude boy, he flies like lightning o'er the heath
Past withered trees like you; you're wrinkled now;
The white has left your teeth,
And settled on your brow.
Your Coan silks, your jewels bright as stars—
Ah no! they bring not back the days of old,
In public calendars
By flying time enrolled.

Where now that beauty? Where those movements?
Where
That colour? What of her, of her is left,
Who, breathing Love's own air,
Me of myself bereft,
Who reigned in Cinara's stead, a fair, fair face,
Queen of sweet arts? But Fate to Cinara gave
A life of little space;
And now she cheats the grave
Of Lyce, spared to raven's length of days,
That youth may see, with laughter and disgust,
A firebrand, once ablaze,
Now smouldering in grey dust." (C.)

What had this wretched Lyce done that Horace should have prayed the gods to strip her of her charms, and to degrade her from a haughty beauty into a maudlin hag, disgusting and ridiculous? Why cast such very merciless stones at one who, by his own avowal, had erewhile witched his very soul from him? Why rejoice to see this once beautiful creature the scoff of all the heartless young fops of Rome? If she had injured him, what of that? Was it so very strange that a woman trained, like all the class to which she belonged, to be the plaything of man's caprice, should have been fickle, mercenary, or even heartless? Poor Lyce might at least have claimed his silence, if he could not do, what Thackeray says every honest fellow should do, "think well of the woman he has once thought well of, and remember her with kindness and tenderness, as a man remembers a place where he has been very happy."

Horace's better self comes out in his playful appeal

to his friend Xanthias (Odes, II. 4) not to be ashamed of having fallen in love with his handmaiden Phyllis. That she is a slave is a matter of no account. A girl of such admirable qualities must surely come of a good stock, and is well worth any man's love. Did not Achilles succumb to Briseis, Ajax to Tecmessa, Agamemnon himself to Cassandra? Moreover,

"For aught that you know, the fair Phyllis may be
The shoot of some highly respectable stem;
Nay, she counts, never doubt it, some kings in her tree,
And laments the lost acres once lorded by them.
Never think that a creature so exquisite grew
In the haunts where but vice and dishonour are known,
Nor deem that a girl so unselfish, so true,
Had a mother 'twould shame thee to take for thine own."

Here we have the true Horace; and after all these fascinating but doubtful Lydés, Neæras, and Pyrrhas, it is pleasant to come across a young beauty like this Phyllis, *sic fidelem, sic lucro aversam.* She, at least, is a fresh and fragrant violet among the languorous hothouse splendours of the Horatian garden.

Domestic love, which plays so large a part in modern poetry, is a theme rarely touched on in Roman verse. Hence we know but little of the Romans in their homes—for such a topic used to be thought beneath the dignity of history—and especially little of the women, who presided over what have been called "the tender and temperate honours of the hearth." The ladies who flourish in the poetry and also in the history of those times, however conspicuous for beauty or attraction, are not generally of the kind

that make home happy. Such matrons as we chiefly read of there would in the present day be apt to figure in the divorce court. Nor is the explanation of this difficult. The prevalence of marriage for mere wealth or connection, and the facility of divorce, which made the marriage-tie almost a farce among the upper classes, had resulted, as it could not fail to do, in a great debasement of morals. A lady did not lose caste either by being divorced, or by seeking divorce, from husband after husband. And as wives in the higher ranks often held the purse-strings, they made themselves pretty frequently more dreaded than beloved by their lords, through being tyrannical, if not unchaste, or both. So at least Horace plainly indicates (Odes, III. 24), when contrasting the vices of Rome with the simpler virtues of some of the nations that were under its sway. In those happier lands, he says, "*Nec dotata regit virum conjux, nec nitido fidit adultero*"—

> "No dowried dame her spouse
> O'erbears, nor trusts the sleek seducer's vows."

But it would be as wrong to infer from this that the taint was universal, as it would be to gauge our own social morality by the erratic matrons and fast young ladies with whom satirical essayists delight to point their periods. The human heart is stronger than the corruptions of luxury, even among the luxurious and the rich; and the life of struggle and privation which is the life of the mass of every nation would have been intolerable but for the security and peace of well-

ordered and happy households. Sweet honest love, cemented by years of sympathy and mutual endurance, was then, as ever, the salt of human life. Many a monumental inscription, steeped in the tenderest pathos, assures us of the fact. What, for example, must have been the home of the man who wrote on his wife's tomb, "She never caused me a pang but when she died!" And Catullus, mere man of pleasure as he was, must have had strongly in his heart the thought of what a tender and pure-souled woman had been in his friend's home, when he wrote his exquisite lines to Calvus on the death of Quinctilia :—

"Calvus, if those now silent in the tomb
Can feel the touch of pleasure in our tears
For those we loved, that perished in their bloom,
And the departed friends of former years—
Oh, then, full surely thy Quinctilia's woe
For the untimely fate, that bids thee part,
Will fade before the bliss she feels to know
How very dear she is unto thy heart!"

Horace, the bachelor, revered the marriage-tie, and did his best, by his verses, to forward the policy of Augustus in his effort to arrest the decay of morals by enforcing the duty of marriage, which the well-to-do Romans of that day were inclined to shirk whenever they could. Nay, the charm of constancy and conjugal sympathy inspired a few of his very finest lines (Odes, I. 13)—"*Felices ter et amplius, quos irrupta tenet copula*," &c.,—the feeling of which is better preserved in Moore's well-known paraphrase than is possible in mere translation :—

"There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,
When two that are linked in one heavenly tie,
With heart never changing, and brow never cold,
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die!
One hour of a passion so sacred is worth
Whole ages of heartless and wandering bliss;
And oh! if there be an Elysium on earth,
It is this, it is this!"

To leave the *placens uxor*—"the winsome wife"—behind, is one of the saddest regrets, Horace tells his friend Posthumus (Odes, II. 14), which death can bring. Still Horace only sang the praises of marriage, contenting himself with painting the Eden within which, for reasons unknown to us, he never sought to enter. He was well up in life, probably, before these sager views dawned upon him. Was it then too late to reduce his precepts to practice, or was he unable to overcome his dread of the *dotata conjux*, and thought his comfort would be safer in the hands of some less exacting fair, such as the Phyllis to whom the following Ode, one of his latest (IV. 11), is addressed?—

"I have laid in a cask of Albanian wine,
Which nine mellow summers have ripened and more;
In my garden, dear Phyllis, thy brows to entwine,
Grows the brightest of parsley in plentiful store.
There is ivy to gleam on thy dark glossy hair;
My plate, newly burnished, enlivens my rooms;
And the altar, athirst for its victim, is there,
Enwreathed with chaste vervain and choicest of blooms.

"Every hand in the household is busily toiling,
And hither and thither boys bustle and girls;

Whilst, up from the hearth-fires careering and coiling,
The smoke round the rafter-beams languidly curls.
Let the joys of the revel be parted between us!
'Tis the Ides of young April, the day which divides
The month, dearest Phyllis, of ocean-sprung Venus,
A day to me dearer than any besides.

"And well may I prize it, and hail its returning—
My own natal-day not more hallowed nor dear;
For Mæcenas, my friend, dates from this happy morning
The life which has swelled to a lustrous career.
You sigh for young Telephus: better forget him!
His rank is not yours, and the gaudier charms
Of a girl that's both wealthy and wanton benet him,
And hold him the fondest of slaves in her arms.

"Remember fond Phaëthon's fiery sequel,
And heavenward-aspiring Bellerophon's fate;
And pine not for one who would ne'er be your equal,
But level your hopes to a lowlier mate.
So, come, my own Phyllis, my heart's latest treasure—
For ne'er for another this bosom shall long—
And I'll teach, while your loved voice re-echoes the measure,
How to charm away care with the magic of song."

This is very pretty and picturesque; and Mæcenas was sure to be charmed with it as a birthday Ode, for such it certainly was, whether there was any real Phyllis in the case or not. Most probably there was not,—the allusion to Telephus, the lady-killer, is so very like many other allusions of the same kind in other Odes, which are plainly mere exercises of fancy, and the protestation that the lady is the very, very last of his loves, so precisely what all middle-aged gentlemen think it right to say, whose "*jeunesse*," like the poet's, has been notoriously "*orageuse*."

It was probably not within the circle of his city friends that Horace saw the women for whom he entertained the deepest respect, but by the hearth-fire in the farmhouse, "the homely house, that harbours quiet rest," with which he was no less familiar, where people lived in a simple and natural way, and where, if anywhere, good wives and mothers were certain to be found. It was manifestly by some woman of this class that the following poem (Odes, III. 23) was inspired :—

"If thou, at each new moon, thine upturned palms,
My rustic Phidyle, to heaven shalt lift,
The Lares soothe with steam of fragrant balms,
A sow, and fruits new-plucked, thy simple gift,

"Nor venomed blast shall nip thy fertile vine,
Nor mildew blight thy harvest in the ear;
Nor shall thy flocks, sweet nurslings, peak and pine,
When apple-bearing Autumn chills the year.

"The victim marked for sacrifice, that feeds
On snow-capped Algidus, in leafy lane
Of oak and ilex, or on Alba's meads,
With its rich blood the pontiff's axe may stain;

"Thy little gods for humbler tribute call
Than blood of many victims; twine for them
Of rosemary a simple coronal,
And the lush myrtle's frail and fragrant stem.

"The costliest sacrifice that wealth can make
From the incensed Penates less commands
A soft response, than doth the poorest cake,
If on the altar laid with spotless hands."

When this was written, Horace had got far beyond

the Epicurean creed of his youth. He had come to believe in the active intervention of a Supreme Disposer of events in the government of the world,—"*insignem attenuans, obscura promens*" (Odes, I. 34):—

> "The mighty ones of earth o'erthrowing,
> Advancing the obscure;—

and to whose "pure eyes and perfect witness" a blameless life and a conscience void of offence were not indifferent.

CHAPTER VII.

HORACE'S POEMS TO HIS FRIENDS.—HIS PRAISES OF CONTENTMENT.

If it be merely the poet, and not the lover, who speaks in most of Horace's love verses, there can never be any doubt that the poems to his friends come direct from his heart. They glow with feeling. To whatever chord they are attuned, sad, or solemn, or joyous, they are always delightful; consummate in their grace of expression, while they have all the warmth and easy flow of spontaneous emotion. Take, for example, the following (Odes, II. 7). Pompeius Varus, a fellow-student with Horace at Athens, and a brother in arms under Brutus, who, after the defeat of Philippi, had joined the party of the younger Pompey, has returned to Rome, profiting probably by the general amnesty granted by Octavius to his adversaries after the battle of Actium. How his heart must have leapt at such a welcome from his poet-friend as this!—

"Dear comrade in the days when thou and I
With Brutus took the field, his perils bore,

Who hath restored thee, freely as of yore,
To thy home gods, and loved Italian sky,

"Pompey, who wert the first my heart to share,
With whom full oft I've sped the lingering day,
Quaffing bright wine, as in our tents we lay,
With Syrian spikenard on our glistening hair?

"With thee I shared Philippi's headlong flight,
My shield behind me left, which was not well,
When all that brave array was broke, and fell
In the vile dust full many a towering wight.

"But me, poor trembler, swift Mercurius bore,
Wrapped in a cloud, through all the hostile din,
Whilst war's tumultuous eddies, closing in,
Swept thee away into the strife once more.

"Then pay to Jove the feasts that are his fee,
And stretch at ease these war-worn limbs of thine
Beneath my laurel's shade; nor spare the wine
Which I have treasured through long years for thee.

"Pour till it touch the shining goblet's rim,
Care-drowning Massic; let rich ointments flow
From amplest conchs! No measure we shall know!
What! shall we wreaths of oozy parsley trim,

"Or simple myrtle? Whom will Venus* send
To rule our revel? Wild my draughts shall be
As Thracian Bacchanals', for 'tis sweet to me
To lose my wits, when I regain my friend."

When Horace penned the playful allusion here

* Venus was the highest cast of the dice. The meaning here is, Who shall be the master of our feast?—that office falling to the member of the wine-party who threw sixes.

made to having left his shield on the field of battle (*parmulâ non bene relicta*), he could never have thought that his commentators—professed admirers, too—would extract from it an admission of personal cowardice. As if any man, much more a Roman to Romans, would make such a confession! Horace could obviously afford to put in this way the fact of his having given up a desperate cause, for this very reason, that he had done his duty on the field of Philippi, and that it was known he had done it. Commentators will be so cruelly prosaic! The poet was quite as serious in saying that Mercury carried him out of the *melée* in a cloud, like one of Homer's heroes, as that he had left his shield discreditably (*non bene*) on the battle-field. But it requires a poetic sympathy, which in classical editors is rare, to understand that, as Lessing and others have urged, the very way he speaks of his own retreat was by implication a compliment, not ungraceful, to his friend, who had continued the struggle against the triumvirate, and come home at last, war-worn and weary, to find the more politic comrade of his youth one of the celebrities of Rome, and on the best of terms with the very men against whom they had once fought side by side.

Not less beautiful is the following Ode to Septimius, another of the poet's old companions in arms (Odes, II. 6). His speaking of himself in it as "with war and travel worn" has puzzled the commentators, as it is plain from the rest of the poem that it must have been written long after his campaigning days were past. But the fatigues of those days may

have left their traces for many years; and the difficulty is at once got over if we suppose the poem to have been written under some little depression from languid health due to this cause. Tarentum, where his friend lived, and whose praises are so warmly sung, was a favourite resort of the poet's. He used to ride there (p. 65) on his mule, very possibly to visit Septimius, before he had his own Sabine villa; and all his love for that villa never chilled his admiration for Tibur, with its "silvan shades, and orchards moist with wimpling rills,"—the "*Tiburni lucus, et uda mobilibus pomaria rivis*,"—and its milder climate, so genial to his sun-loving temperament:—

"Septimius, thou who wouldst, I know,
With me to distant Gades go,
And visit the Cantabrian fell,
Whom all our triumphs cannot quell,
And even the sands barbarian brave,
Where ceaseless seethes the Moorish wave;

"May Tibur, that delightful haunt,
Reared by an Argive emigrant,
The tranquil haven be, I pray,
For my old age to wear away;
Oh, may it be the final bourne
To one with war and travel worn!

"But should the cruel fates decree
That this, my friend, shall never be,
Then to Galæsus, river sweet
To skin-clad flocks, will I retreat,
And those rich meads, where sway of yore
Laconian Phalanthus bore.

"In all the world no spot there is,
That wears for me a smile like this,
The honey of whose thymy fields
May vie with what Hymettus yields,
Where berries clustering every slope
May with Venafrum's greenest cope.

"There Jove accords a lengthened spring,
And winters wanting winter's sting,
And sunny Aulon's* broad incline
Such mettle puts into the vine,
Its clusters need not envy those
Which fiery Falernum grows.

"Thyself and me that spot invites,
Those pleasant fields, those sunny heights;
And there, to life's last moments true,
Wilt thou with some fond tears bedew—
The last sad tribute love can lend—
The ashes of thy poet-friend."

Septimius was himself a poet, or thought himself one, who,

"Holding vulgar ponds and runnels cheap,
At Pindar's fount drank valiantly and deep,"

as Horace says of him in an Epistle (I. 3) to Julius Florus; adding, with a sly touch of humour, which throws more than a doubt on the poetic powers of their common friend,—

"Thinks he of me? And does he still aspire
To marry Theban strains to Latium's lyre,
Thanks to the favouring muse? Or haply rage
And mouth in bombast for the tragic stage?"

* Galæsus (Galaso), a river; Aulon, a hill near Tarentum.

When this was written Septimius was in Armenia along with Florus, on the staff of Tiberius Claudius Nero, the future emperor. For this appointment he was probably indebted to Horace, who applied for it, at his request, in the following Epistle to Tiberius (I. 9), which Addison ('Spectator,' 493) cites as a fine specimen of what a letter of introduction should be. Horace was, on principle, wisely chary of giving such introductions.

"Look round and round the man you recommend,
For yours will be the shame if he offend," (C.)

is his maxim on this subject (Epistles, I. 18, 76); and he was sure to be especially scrupulous in writing to Tiberius, who, even in his youth—and he was at this time about twenty-two—was so morose and unpleasant in his manners, to say nothing of his ample share of the hereditary pride of the Claudian family, that even Augustus felt under constraint in his company:—

"Septimius only understands, 'twould seem,
How high I stand in, Claudius, your esteem:
For when he begs and prays me, day by day,
Before you his good qualities to lay,
As not unfit the heart and home to share
Of Nero, who selects his friends with care;
When he supposes you to me extend
The rights and place of a familiar friend,
Far better than myself he sees and knows,
How far with you my commendation goes.
Pleas without number I protest I've used,
In hope he'd hold me from the task excused,
Yet feared the while it might be thought I feigned
Too low the influence I perchance have gained,

Dissembling it as nothing with my friends,
To keep it for my own peculiar ends.
So, to escape such dread reproach, I put
My blushes by, and boldly urge my suit.
If then you hold it as a grace, though small,
To doff one's bashfulness at friendship's call,
Enrol him in your suite, assured you'll find
A man of heart in him, as well as mind."

We may be very sure that, among the many pleas urged by Horace for not giving Septimius the introduction he desired, was the folly of leaving his delightful retreat at Tarentum to go once more abroad in search of wealth or promotion. Let others "cross, to plunder provinces, the main," surely this was no ambition for an embryo Pindar or half-developed Æschylus. Horace had tried similar remonstrances before, and with just as little success, upon Iccius, another of his scholarly friends, who sold off his fine library and joined an expedition into Arabia Felix, expecting to find it an El Dorado. He playfully asks this studious friend (Odes, I. 29), from whom he expected better things — "*pollicitus meliora*" — if it be true that he grudges the Arabs their wealth, and is actually forging fetters for the hitherto invincible Sabæan monarchs, and those terrible Medians? To which of the royal damsels does he intend to throw the handkerchief, having first cut down her princely betrothed in single combat? Or what young "oiled and curled" Oriental prince is for the future to pour out his wine for him? Iccius, like many another Raleigh, went out to gather wool, and came back shorn. The expedition proved disastrous, and he was lucky in being

one of the few who survived it. Some years afterwards we meet with him again as the steward of Agrippa's great estates in Sicily. He has resumed his studies,—

> "On themes sublime alone intent,—
> What causes the wild ocean sway,
> The seasons what from June to May,
> If free the constellations roll,
> Or moved by some supreme control;
> What makes the moon obscure her light,
> What pours her splendour on the night."

Absorbed in these and similar inquiries, and living happily on "herbs and frugal fare," Iccius realises the noble promise of his youth; and Horace, in writing to him (Epist., I. 12), encourages him in his disregard of wealth by some of those hints for contentment which the poet never tires of reproducing :—

> "Let no care trouble you; for poor
> That man is not, who can insure
> Whate'er for life is needful found.
> Let your digestion be but sound,
> Your side unwrung by spasm or stitch,
> Your foot unconscious of a twitch;
> And could you be more truly blest,
> Though of the wealth of kings possessed?"

It must have been pleasant to Horace to find even one among his friends illustrating in his life this modest Socratic creed; for he is so constantly enforcing it, in every variety of phrase and metaphor, that while we must conclude that he regarded it as the one doctrine most needful for his time, we must equally

conclude that he found it utterly disregarded. All round him wealth, wealth, wealth, was the universal aim: wealth, to build fine houses in town, and villas at Prænestе or Baiæ; wealth, to stock them with statues, old bronzes (mostly fabrications from the Wardour Streets of Athens or Rome), ivories, pictures, gold plate, pottery, tapestry, stuffs from the looms of Tyre, and other *articles de luxe;* wealth, to give gorgeous dinners, and wash them down with the costliest wines; wealth, to provide splendid equipages, to forestall the front seats in the theatre, as we do opera-boxes on the grand tier, and so get a few yards nearer to the Emperor's chair, or gain a closer view of the favourite actor or dancer of the day; wealth, to secure a wife with a fortune and a pedigree; wealth, to attract gadfly friends, who will consume your time, eat your dinners, drink your wines, and then abuse them, and who will with amiable candour regale their circle by quizzing your foibles, or slandering your taste, if they are even so kind as to spare your character. "A dowried wife," he says (Epistles, I. 6),

> "Friends, beauty, birth, fair fame,
> These are the gifts of money, heavenly dame;
> Be but a moneyed man, persuasion tips
> Your tongue, and Venus settles on your lips." (C.)

And to achieve this wealth, no sacrifice was to be spared—time, happiness, health, honour itself. "*Rem facias, rem! Si possis recte, si non, quocunque modo rem:*"—

> "Get money, money still,
> And then let Virtue follow, if she will."

Wealth sought in this spirit, and for such ends, of course brought no more enjoyment to the contemporaries of Horace than we see it doing to our own. And not the least evil of the prevailing mania, then as now, was, that it robbed life of its simplicity, and of the homely friendliness on which so much of its pleasure depends. People lived for show—to propitiate others, not to satisfy their own better instincts or their genuine convictions; and straining after the shadow of enjoyment, they let the reality slip from their grasp. They never "were, but always to be, blest." It was the old story, which the world is continually re-enacting, while the sage stands by, and marvels at its folly, and preaches what we call commonplaces, in a vain endeavour to modify or to prevent it. But the wisdom of life consists of commonplaces, which we should all be much the better for working into our practice, instead of complacently sneering at them as platitudes. Horace abounds in commonplaces, and on no theme more than this. He has no divine law of duty to appeal to, as we have—no assured hereafter to which he may point the minds of men; but he presses strongly home their folly, in so far as this world is concerned. To what good, he asks, all this turmoil and disquiet? No man truly possesses more than he is able thoroughly to enjoy. Grant that you roll in gold, or, by accumulating land, become, in Hamlet's phrase, "spacious in the possession of dirt." What pleasure will you extract from these, which a moderate estate will not yield in equal, if not greater, measure? You fret yourself to acquire your wealth—

you fret yourself lest you should lose it. It robs you of your health, your ease of mind, your freedom of thought and action. Riches will not bribe inexorable death to spare you. At any hour that great leveller may sweep you away into darkness and dust, and what will it then avail you, that you have wasted all your hours, and foregone all wholesome pleasure, in adding ingot to ingot, or acre to acre, for your heirs to squander? Set a bound, then, to your desires: think not of how much others have, but of how much which they have you can do perfectly well without. Be not the slave of show or circumstance, "but in yourself possess your own desire." Do not lose the present in vain perplexities about the future. If fortune lours to-day, she may smile to-morrow; and when she lavishes her gifts upon you, cherish an humble heart, and so fortify yourself against her caprice. Keep a rein upon all your passions—upon covetousness, above all; for once that has you within its clutch, farewell for ever to the light heart and the sleep that comes unbidden, to the open eye that drinks in delight from the beauty and freshness and infinite variety of nature, to the unclouded mind that judges justly and serenely of men and things. Enjoy wisely, for then only you enjoy thoroughly. Live each day as though it were your last. Mar not your life by a hopeless quarrel with destiny. It will be only too brief at the best, and the day is at hand when its inequalities will be redressed, and king and peasant, pauper and millionaire, be huddled, poor shivering phantoms, in one undistinguishable crowd, across the melancholy Styx, to the judg-

ment-hall of Minos. To this theme many of Horace's finest Odes are strung. Of these, not the least graceful is that addressed to Dellius (II. 3):—

"Let not the frowns of fate
Disquiet thee, my friend,
Nor, when she smiles on thee, do thou, elate
With vaunting thoughts, ascend
Beyond the limits of becoming mirth;
For, Dellius, thou must die, become a clod of earth!

"Whether thy days go down
In gloom, and dull regrets,
Or, shunning life's vain struggle for renown,
Its fever and its frets,
Stretch'd on the grass, with old Falernian wine,
Thou giv'st the thoughtless hours a rapture all divine.

"Where the tall spreading pine
And white-leaved poplar grow,
And, mingling their broad boughs in leafy twine,
A grateful shadow throw,
Where down its broken bed the wimpling stream
Writhes on its sinuous way with many a quivering gleam,

"There wine, there perfumes bring,
Bring garlands of the rose,
Fair and too shortlived daughter of the spring,
While youth's bright current flows
Within thy veins,—ere yet hath come the hour
When the dread Sisters Three shall clutch thee in their power.

"Thy woods, thy treasured pride,
Thy mansion's pleasant seat,
Thy lawns washed by the Tiber's yellow tide,
Each favourite retreat,

Thou must leave all—all, and thine heir shall run
In riot through the wealth thy years of toil have won.

"It recks not whether thou
Be opulent, and trace
Thy birth from kings, or bear upon thy brow
Stamp of a beggar's race;
In rags or splendour, death at thee alike,
That no compassion hath for aught of earth, will strike.

"One road, and to one bourne
We all are goaded. Late
Or soon will issue from the urn
Of unrelenting Fate
The lot, that in yon bark exiles us all
To undiscovered shores, from which is no recall."

In a still higher strain he sings (Odes, III. 1) the ultimate equality of all human souls, and the vanity of encumbering life with the anxieties of ambition or wealth:—

"Whate'er our rank may be,
We all partake one common destiny!
In fair expanse of soil,
Teeming with rich returns of wine and oil,
His neighbour one outvies;
Another claims to rise
To civic dignities,
Because of ancestry and noble birth,
Or fame, or proved pre-eminence of worth,
Or troops of clients, clamorous in his cause;
Still Fate doth grimly stand,
And with impartial hand
The lots of lofty and of lowly draws
From that capacious urn
Whence every name that lives is shaken in its turn.

"To him, above whose guilty head,
Suspended by a thread,
The naked sword is hung for evermore,
Not feasts Sicilian shall
With all their cates recall
That zest the simplest fare could once inspire;
Nor song of birds, nor music of the lyre
Shall his lost sleep restore:
But gentle sleep shuns not
The rustic's lowly cot,
Nor mossy bank o'ercanopied with trees,
Nor Tempe's leafy vale stirred by the western breeze.

"The man who lives content with whatsoe'er
Sufficeth for his needs,
The storm-tossed ocean vexeth not with care,
Nor the fierce tempest which Arcturus breeds,
When in the sky he sets,
Nor that which Hœdus, at his rise, begets:
Nor will he grieve, although
His vines be all laid low
Beneath the driving hail,
Nor though, by reason of the drenching rain,
Or heat, that shrivels up his fields like fire,
Or fierce extremities of winter's ire,
Blight shall o'erwhelm his fruit-trees and his grain,
And all his farm's delusive promise fail.

"The fish are conscious that a narrower bound
Is drawn the seas around
By masses huge hurled down into the deep.
There, at the bidding of a lord, for whom
Not all the land he owns is ample room,
Do the contractor and his labourers heap
Vast piles of stone, the ocean back to sweep.

But let him climb in pride,
That lord of halls unblest,
Up to their topmost crest,
Yet ever by his side
Climb Terror and Unrest;
Within the brazen galley's sides
Care, ever wakeful, flits,
And at his back, when forth in state he rides,
Her withering shadow sits.

"If thus it fare with all,
If neither marbles from the Phrygian mine,
Nor star-bright robes of purple and of pall,
Nor the Falernian vine,
Nor costliest balsams, fetched from farthest Ind,
Can soothe the restless mind,
Why should I choose
To rear on high, as modern spendthrifts use,
A lofty hall, might be the home for kings,
With portals vast, for Malice to abuse,
Or Envy make her theme to point a tale;
Or why for wealth, which new-born trouble brings,
Exchange my Sabine vale?"

CHAPTER VIII.

PREVAILING BELIEF IN ASTROLOGY.—HORACE'S VIEWS OF A HEREAFTER.—RELATIONS WITH MÆCENAS.—BELIEF IN THE PERMANENCE OF HIS OWN FAME.

"When all looks fair about," says Sir Thomas Browne, "and thou seest not a cloud so big as a hand to threaten thee, forget not the wheel of things; think of sudden vicissitudes, but beat not thy brains to foreknow them." It was characteristic of an age of luxury that it should be one of superstition and mental disquietude, eager to penetrate the future, and credulous in its belief of those who pretended to unveil its secrets. In such an age astrology naturally found many dupes. Rome was infested with professors of that so-called science, who had flocked thither from the East, and were always ready, like other oracles, to supply responses acceptable to their votaries. In what contempt Horace held their prognostications the following Ode (I. 11) very clearly indicates. The women of Rome, according to Juvenal, were great believers in astrology, and carried manuals of it on their persons, which they consulted before they took an airing or broke their fast. Possibly on this account

Horace addressed the ode to a lady. But in such things, and not under the Roman Empire only, there have always been, as La Fontaine says, "*bon nombre d'hommes qui sont femmes.*" If Augustus, and his great general and statesman Agrippa, had a Theogenes to forecast their fortunes, so the first Napoleon had his Madame Lenormand.

"Ask not—such lore's forbidden—
What destined term may be
Within the future hidden
For us, Leuconöe.
Both thou and I
Must quickly die!
Content thee, then, nor madly hope
To wrest a false assurance from Chaldean horoscope.

"Far nobler, better were it,
Whate'er may be in store,
With soul serene to bear it,
If winters many more
Jove spare for thee,
Or this shall be
The last, that now with sullen roar
Scatters the Tuscan surge in foam upon the rock-bound shore.

"Be wise, your spirit firing
With cups of tempered wine,
And hopes afar aspiring
In compass brief confine,
Use all life's powers;
The envious hours
Fly as we talk; then live to-day,
Nor fondly to to-morrow trust more than you must or may."

In the verses of Horace we are perpetually reminded that our life is compassed round with darkness, but he will not suffer this darkness to overshadow his cheerfulness. On the contrary, the beautiful world, and the delights it offers, are made to stand out, as it were, in brighter relief against the gloom of Orcus. Thus, for example, this very gloom is made the background in the following Ode (I. 4) for the brilliant pictures which crowd on the poet's fancy with the first burst of Spring. Here, he says, oh Sestius, all is fresh and joyous, luxuriant and lovely! Be happy, drink in "at every pore the spirit of the season," while the roses are fresh within your hair, and the wine-cup flashes ruby in your hand. Yonder lies Pluto's meagrely-appointed mansion, and filmy shadows of the dead are waiting for you there, to swell their joyless ranks. To that unlovely region you must go, alas! too soon; but the golden present is yours, so drain it of its sweets.

"As biting Winter flies, lo! Spring with sunny skies,
And balmy airs; and barks long dry put out again from shore;
Now the ox forsakes his byre, and the husbandman his fire,
And daisy-dappled meadows bloom where winter frosts lay hoar.

"By Cytherea led, while the moon shines overhead,
The Nymphs and Graces, hand-in-hand, with alternating feet
Shake the ground, while swinking Vulcan strikes the sparkles fierce and red
From the forges of the Cyclops, with reiterated beat.

"'Tis the time with myrtle green to bind our glistening locks,
Or with flowers, wherein the loosened earth herself hath newly dressed,
And to sacrifice to Faunus in some glade amidst the rocks
A yearling lamb, or else a kid, if such delight him best.

"Death comes alike to all—to the monarch's lordly hall,
Or the hovel of the beggar, and his summons none shall stay.
Oh, Sestius, happy Sestius! use the moments as they pass;
Far-reaching hopes are not for us, the creatures of a day.

"Thee soon shall night enshroud; and the Manes' phantom crowd,
And the starveling house unbeautiful of Pluto shut thee in;
And thou shalt not banish care by the ruddy wine-cup there,
Nor woo the gentle Lycidas, whom all are mad to win."

A modern would no more think of using such images as those of the last two verses to stimulate the festivity of his friends than he would of placing, like the old Egyptians, a skull upon his dinner-table, or of decorating his ball-room with Holbein's "Dance of Death." We rebuke our pride or keep our vanities in check by the thought of death, and our poets use it to remind us that

> "The glories of our blood and state
> Are shadows, not substantial things."

Horace does this too; but out of the sad certainty of mortality he seems to extract a keener zest for the too brief enjoyment of the flying hours. Why is this? Probably because by the pagan mind life on this side the grave was regarded as a thing more precious, more

noble, than the life beyond. That there was a life beyond was undoubtedly the general belief. "*Sunt aliquid Manes; letum non omnia finit, Luridaque evictos effugit umbra rogos,*"—

> "The Manes are no dream; death closes not
> Our all of being, and the wan-visaged shade
> Escapes unscathed from the funereal fires,"

says Propertius (Eleg. IV. 7); and unless this were so, there would be no meaning whatever in the whole pagan idea of Hades—in the "*domus exilis Plutonia;*" in the Hermes driving the spirits of the dead across the Styx; in the "*judicantem Æacum, sedesque discretas piorum*"—the "Æacus dispensing doom, and the Elysian Fields serene" (Odes, II. 13). But this after-life was a cold, sunless, unsubstantial thing, lower in quality and degree than the full, vigorous, passionate life of this world. The nobler spirits of antiquity, it hardly need be said, had higher dreams of a future state than this. For them, no more than for us, was it possible to rest in the conviction that their brief and troubled career on earth was to be the "be all and the end all" of existence, or that those whom they had loved and lost in death became thenceforth as though they had never been. It is idle to draw, as is often done, a different conclusion from such phrases as that after death we are a shadow and mere dust, "*pulvis et umbra sumus!*" or from Horace's bewildered cry (Odes, I. 24), when a friend of signal nobleness and purity is suddenly struck down—"*Ergo Quinctilium perpetuus sopor urget?*"—"And is Quinc-

tilius, then, weighed down by a sleep that knows no waking?" We might as reasonably argue that Shakespeare did not believe in a life after death because he makes Prospero say—

> "We are such stuff
> As dreams are made of, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep."

Horace and Shakespeare both believed in an immortality, but it was an immortality different in its kind. Horace, indeed,—who, as a rule, is wisely silent on a question which for him had no solution, however much it may have engaged his speculations,—has gleams not unlike those which irradiate our happier creed, as when he writes (Odes, III. 2) of "*Virtus, recludens immeritis mori cœlum, negata tentat iter via*"—

> "Worth, which heaven's gates to those unbars
> Who never should have died,
> A pathway cleaves among the stars,
> To meaner souls denied."

But they are only gleams, impassioned hopes, yearnings of the unsatisfied soul in its search for some solution of the great mystery of life. To him, therefore, it was of more moment than it was to us, to make the most of the present, and to stimulate his relish for what it has to give by contrasting it with a phantasmal future, in which no single faculty of enjoyment should be left.

Take from life the time spent in hopes or fears or regrets, and how small the residue! For the same reason, therefore, that he prized life intensely, Horace

seems to have resolved to keep these consumers of its hours as much at bay as possible. He would not look too far forward even for a pleasure; for Hope, he knew, comes never unaccompanied by her twin sister Fear. Like the Persian poet, Omar Khayyám, this is ever in his thoughts—

> "What boots it to repeat,
> How Time is slipping underneath our feet?
> Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday,
> Why fret about them if To-day be sweet?"

To-day—that alone is ours. Let us welcome and note what it brings, and, if good, enjoy it; if evil, endure. Let us, in any case, keep our eyes and senses open, and not lose their impressions in dreaming of an irretrievable past or of an impenetrable future. "Write it on your heart," says Emerson ('Society and Solitude'), "that every day is the best day in the year. No man has learned anything rightly until he knows that every day is Doomsday. . . . Ah, poor dupe! will you never learn that as soon as the irrecoverable years have woven their blue glories between To-day and us, these passing hours shall glitter, and draw us, as the wildest romance and the homes of beauty and poetry?" Horace would have hailed a brother in the philosopher of New England.

Even in inviting Mæcenas to his Sabine farm (Odes, III. 29), he does not think it out of place to remind the minister of state, worn with the cares of government, and looking restlessly ahead to anticipate its difficulties, that it may, after all, be wiser not to look

so far ahead, or to trouble himself about contingencies which may never arise. We must not think that Horace undervalued that essential quality of true statesmanship, the "*animus rerum prudens*" (Odes, IV. 9), the forecasting spirit that "looks into the seeds of Time," and reads the issues of events while they are still far off. He saw and prized the splendid fruits of the exercise of this very power in the growing tranquillity and strength of the Roman empire. But the wisest may over-study a subject. Mæcenas may have been working too hard, and losing under the pressure something of his usual calmness; and Horace, while urging him to escape from town for a few days, may have had it in view to insinuate the suggestion, that Jove smiles, not at the common mortal merely, but even at the sagacious statesman, who is over-anxious about the future—"*ultra fas trepidat*"—and to remind him that, after all,

> "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we may."

Dryden's splendid paraphrase of this Ode is one of the glories of our literature, but it is a paraphrase, and a version closer to the original may be more appropriate here :—

> "Scion of Tuscan kings, in store
> I've laid a cask of mellow wine,
> That never has been broached before.
> I've roses, too, for wreaths to twine,
> And Nubian nut, that for thy hair
> An oil shall yield of fragrance rare.
>
> . . . . .

"The plenty quit, that only palls,
And, turning from the cloud-capped pile
That towers above thy palace halls,
Forget to worship for a while
The privileges Rome enjoys,
Her smoke, her splendour, and her noise.

"It is the rich who relish best
To dwell at times from state aloof;
And simple suppers, neatly dressed,
Beneath a poor man's humble roof,
With neither pall nor purple there,
Have smoothed ere now the brow of care.

. . . .

"Now with his spent and languid flocks
The wearied shepherd seeks the shade,
The river cool, the shaggy rocks,
That overhang the tangled glade,
And by the stream no breeze's gush
Disturbs the universal hush.

"Thou dost devise with sleepless zeal
What course may best the state beseem,
And, fearful for the City's weal,
Weigh'st anxiously each hostile scheme
That may be hatching far away
In Scythia, India, or Cathay.

"Most wisely Jove in thickest night
The issues of the future veils,
And laughs at the self-torturing wight
Who with imagined terrors quails.
The present only is thine own,
Then use it well, ere it has flown.

"All else which may by time be bred
Is like a river of the plain,

Now gliding gently o'er its bed
Along to the Etruscan main,
Now whirling onwards, fierce and fast,
Uprooted trees, and boulders vast,

"And flocks, and houses, all in drear
Confusion tossed from shore to shore,
While mountains far, and forests near
Reverberate the rising roar,
When lashing rains among the hills
To fury wake the quiet rills.

"Lord of himself that man will be,
And happy in his life alway,
Who still at eve can say with free
Contented soul, 'I've lived to-day!
Let Jove to-morrow, if he will,
With blackest clouds the welkin fill,

"'Or flood it all with sunlight pure,
Yet from the past he cannot take
Its influence, for that is sure,
Nor can he mar or bootless make
Whate'er of rapture and delight
The hours have borne us in their flight.'"

The poet here passes, by one of those sudden transitions for which he is remarkable, into the topic of the fickleness of fortune, which seems to have no immediate connection with what has gone before,—but only seems, for this very fickleness is but a fresh reason for making ourselves, by self-possession and a just estimate of what is essential to happiness, independent of the accidents of time or chance.

"Fortune, who with malicious glee
Her merciless vocation plies,
Benignly smiling now on me,
Now on another, bids him rise,
And in mere wantonness of whim
Her favours shifts from me to him.

"I laud her whilst by me she holds,
But if she spread her pinions swift,
I wrap me in my virtue's folds,
And, yielding back her every gift,
Take refuge in the life so free
Of bare but honest poverty.

"You will not find me, when the mast
Groans 'neath the stress of southern gales,
To wretched prayers rush off, nor cast
Vows to the great gods, lest my bales
From Tyre or Cyprus sink, to be
Fresh booty for the hungry sea.

"When others then in wild despair
To save their cumbrous wealth essay,
I to the vessel's skiff repair,
And, whilst the Twin Stars light my way,
Safely the breeze my little craft
Shall o'er the Ægean billows waft."

Mæcenas was of a melancholy temperament, and liable to great depression of spirits. Not only was his health at no time robust, but he was constitutionally prone to fever, which more than once proved nearly fatal to him. On his first appearance in the theatre after one of these dangerous attacks, he was received with vehement cheers, and Horace alludes twice to this incident in his Odes, as if he knew that

it had given especial pleasure to his friend. To mark the event the poet laid up in his cellar a jar of Sabine wine, and some years afterwards he invites Mæcenas to come and partake of it in this charming lyric (Odes, I. 20):—

"Our common Sabine wine shall be
The only drink I'll give to thee,
In modest goblets, too;
'Twas stored in crock of Grecian delf,
Dear knight Mæcenas, by myself,
That very day when through
The theatre thy plaudits rang,
And sportive echo caught the clang,
And answered from the banks
Of thine own dear paternal stream,
Whilst Vatican renewed the theme
Of homage and of thanks!
Old Cæcuban, the very best,
And juice in vats Calenian pressed,
You drink at home, I know:
My cups no choice Falernian fills,
Nor unto them do Formiæ's hills
Impart a tempered glow."

About the same time that Mæcenas recovered from this fever, Horace made a narrow escape from being killed by the fall of a tree, and, what to him was a great aggravation of the disaster, upon his own beloved farm (Odes, II. 13). He links the two events together as a marked coincidence in the following Ode (II. 17). His friend had obviously been a prey to one of his fits of low spirits, and vexing the kindly soul of the poet by gloomy anticipations of an early death. Suffering,

as Mæcenas did, from those terrible attacks of sleeplessness to which he was subject, and which he tried ineffectually to soothe by the plash of falling water and the sound of distant music,* such misgivings were only too natural. The case was too serious this time for Horace to think of rallying his friend into a brighter humour. He may have even seen good cause to share his fears; for his heart is obviously moved to its very depths, and his sympathy and affection well out in words, the pathos of which is still as fresh as the day they first came with comfort to the saddened spirits of Mæcenas himself.

"Why wilt thou kill me with thy boding fears?
Why, oh Mæcenas, why?
Before thee lies a train of happy years:
Yes, nor the gods nor I
Could brook that thou shouldst first be laid in dust,
Who art my stay, my glory, and my trust!

"Ah, if untimely Fate should snatch thee hence,
Thee, of my soul a part,
Why should I linger on, with deadened sense,
And ever-aching heart,
A worthless fragment of a fallen shrine?
No, no, one day shall see thy death and mine!

"Think not that I have sworn a bootless oath;
Yes, we shall go, shall go,
Hand link'd in hand, whene'er thou leadest, both
The last sad road below!

* Had Horace this in his mind when he wrote "*Non avium citharæque cantus somnum reducent?*"—(Odes, III. 1.)

"Nor song of birds, nor music of the lyre,
Shall his lost sleep restore."

Me neither the Chimæra's fiery breath,
Nor Gyges, even could Gyges rise from death,

"With all his hundred hands from thee shall sever;
For in such sort it hath
Pleased the dread Fates, and Justice potent ever,
To interweave our path.*
Beneath whatever aspect thou wert born,
Libra, or Scorpion fierce, or Capricorn,

"The blustering tyrant of the western deep,
This well I know, my friend,
Our stars in wondrous wise one orbit keep,
And in one radiance blend.
From thee were Saturn's baleful rays afar
Averted by great Jove's refulgent star,

"And His hand stayed Fate's downward-swooping wing,
When thrice with glad acclaim
The teeming theatre was heard to ring,
And thine the honoured name:
So had the falling timber laid me low,
But Pan in mercy warded off the blow,

"Pan who keeps watch o'er easy souls like mine.
Remember, then, to rear
In gratitude to Jove a votive shrine,
And slaughter many a steer,
Whilst I, as fits, an humbler tribute pay,
And a meek lamb upon his altar lay."

What the poet, in this burst of loving sympathy,

* So Cowley, in his poem on the death of Mr William Harvey:—

"He was my friend, the truest friend on earth;
A strong and mighty influence joined our birth.

said would happen, did happen almost as he foretold it. Mæcenas "first deceased;" and Horace, like the wife in the quaint, tender, old epitaph,

"For a little tried
To live without him, liked it not, and died."

But this was not till many years after this Ode was written, which must have been about the year B.C. 36, when Horace was thirty-nine. Mæcenas lived for seventeen years afterwards, and often and often, we may believe, turned to read the Ode, and be refreshed by it, when his pulse was low, and his heart sick and weary.

Horace included it in the first series of the Odes, containing Books I. and II., which he gave to the world (B.C. 24). The first of these Odes, like the first of the Satires, is addressed to Mæcenas. They had for the most part been written, and were, no doubt, separately in circulation several years before. That they should have met with success was certain; for the accomplished men who led society in Rome must have felt their beauty even more keenly than the scholars of a more recent time. These lyrics brought the music of Greece, which was their ideal, into their native verse; and a feeling of national pride must have helped to augment their admiration. Horace had tuned his ear upon the lyres of Sappho and Alcæus. He had even in his youth essayed to imitate them in their own tongue,—a mistake as great as for Goethe or Heine to have tried to put their lyrical inspiration into the language of Herrick or of Burns. But Horace was preserved from perseverance in this mistake by his

natural good sense, or, as he puts it himself, with a fair poetic licence (Satires, I. 10), by Rome's great founder Quirinus warning him in a dream, that

> "To think of adding to the mighty throng
> Of the great paragons of Grecian song,
> Were no less mad an act than his who should
> Into a forest carry logs of wood."

These exercises may not, however, have been without their value in enabling him to transfuse the melodic rhythm of the Greeks into his native verse. And as he was the first to do this successfully, if we except Catullus in some slight but exquisite poems, so he was the last. "Of lyrists," says Quintilian, "Horace is alone, one might say, worthy to be read. For he has bursts of inspiration, and is full of playful delicacy and grace; and in the variety of his images, as well as in expression, shows a most happy daring." Time has confirmed the verdict; and it has recently found eloquent expression in the words of one of our greatest scholars:—

"Horace's style," says Mr H. A. J. Munro, in the introduction to his edition of the poet, "is throughout his own, borrowed from none who preceded him, successfully imitated by none who came after him. The Virgilian heroic was appropriated by subsequent generations of poets, and adapted to their purposes with signal success. The hendecasyllable and scazon of Catullus became part and parcel of the poetic heritage of Rome, and Martial employs them only less happily than their matchless creator. But the moulds in which Horace cast his lyrical and his satirical thoughts were broken at his death. The style neither of Persius nor of Juvenal has the faintest resemblance to that of their common master. Statius, whose hendeca-

syllables are passable enough, has given us one Alcaic and one Sapphic ode, which recall the bald and constrained efforts of a modern schoolboy. I am sure he could not have written any two consecutive stanzas of Horace; and if he could not, who could?"

Before he published the first two books of his Odes, Horace had fairly felt his wings, and knew they could carry him gracefully and well. He no longer hesitates, as he had done while a writer of Satires only (p. 55), to claim the title of poet; but at the same time he throws himself, in his introductory Ode, with a graceful deference, upon the judgment of Mæcenas. Let that only seal his lyrics with approval, and he will feel assured of his title to rank with the great sons of song:—

> "Do thou but rank me 'mong
> The sacred bards of lyric song,
> I'll soar beyond the lists of time,
> And strike the stars with head sublime."

In the last Ode, also addressed to Mæcenas, of the Second Book, the poet gives way to a burst of joyous anticipation of future fame, figuring himself as a swan soaring majestically across all the then known regions of the world. When he puts forth the Third Book several years afterwards, he closes it with a similar pæan of triumph, which, unlike most prophecies of the kind, has been completely fulfilled. In both he alludes to the lowliness of his birth, speaking of himself in the former as a child of poor parents—"*pauperum sanguis parentum;*" in the latter as having risen to eminence from a mean estate—"*ex humili potens.*" These touches

of egotism, the sallies of some brighter hour, are not merely venial; they are delightful in a man so habitually modest.

"I've reared a monument, my own,
More durable than brass;
Yea, kingly pyramids of stone
In height it doth surpass.

"Rain shall not sap, nor driving blast
Disturb its settled base,
Nor countless ages rolling past
Its symmetry deface.

"I shall not wholly die. Some part,
Nor that a little, shall
Escape the dark Destroyer's dart,
And his grim festival.

"For long as with his Vestals mute
Rome's Pontifex shall climb
The Capitol, my fame shall shoot
Fresh buds through future time.

"Where brawls loud Aufidus, and came
Parch'd Daunus erst, a horde
Of rustic boors to sway, my name
Shall be a household word;

"As one who rose from mean estate,
The first with poet fire
Æolic song to modulate
To the Italian lyre.

"Then grant, Melpomene, thy son
Thy guerdon proud to wear,
And Delphic laurels, duly won,
Bind thou upon my hair!"

CHAPTER IX.

HORACE'S RELATIONS WITH AUGUSTUS.—HIS LOVE OF INDEPENDENCE.

No intimate friend of Mæcenas was likely to be long a stranger to Augustus; and it is most improbable that Augustus, who kept up his love of good literature amid all the distractions of conquest and empire, should not have early sought the acquaintance of a man of such conspicuous ability as Horace. But when they first became known to each other is uncertain. In more than one of the Epodes Horace speaks of him, but not in terms to imply personal acquaintance. Some years further on it is different. When Trebatius (Satires, II. 1) is urging the poet, if write he must, to renounce satire, and to sing of Cæsar's triumphs, from which he would reap gain as well as glory, Horace replies,—

> "Most worthy sir, that's just the thing
> I'd like especially to sing;
> But at the task my spirits faint,
> For 'tis not every one can paint
> Battalions, with their bristling wall
> Of pikes, and make you see the Gaul,

With shivered spear, in death-throe bleed,
Or Parthian stricken from his steed."

Then why not sing, rejoins Trebatius, his justice and his fortitude,

"Like sage Lucilius, in his lays
To Scipio Africanus' praise?"

The reply is that of a man who had obviously been admitted to personal contact with the Cæsar, and, with instinctive good taste, recoiled from doing what he knew would be unacceptable to him, unless called for by some very special occasion:—

"When time and circumstance suggest,
I shall not fail to do my best;
But never words of mine shall touch
Great Cæsar's ear, but only such
As are to the occasion due,
And spring from my conviction, too;
For stroke him with an awkward hand,
And he kicks out—you understand?"

an allusion, no doubt, to the impatience entertained by Augustus, to which Suetonius alludes, of the indiscreet panegyrics of poetasters by which he was persecuted. The gossips of Rome clearly believed (Satires, II. 6) that the poet was intimate with Cæsar; for he is "so close to the gods"—that is, on such a footing with Augustus and his chief advisers — that they assume, as a matter of course, he must have early tidings of all the most recent political news at first hand. However this may be, by the time the Odes were published Horace had overcome any previous

scruples, and sang in no measured terms the praises of him, the back-stroke of whose rebuke he had professed himself so fearful of provoking.

All Horace's prepossessions must have been against one of the leaders before whose opposition Brutus, the ideal hero of his youthful enthusiasm, had succumbed. Neither were the sanguinary proscriptions and ruthless spoliations by which the triumvirate asserted its power, and from a large share of the guilt of which Augustus could not shake himself free, calculated to conciliate his regards. He had much to forget and to forgive before he could look without aversion upon the blood-stained avenger of the great Cæsar. But in times like those in which Horace's lot was cast, we do not judge of men or things as we do when social order is unbroken, when political crime is never condoned, and the usual standards of moral judgment are rigidly enforced. Horace probably soon came to see, what is now very apparent, that when Brutus and his friends struck down Cæsar, they dealt a deathblow to what, but for this event, might have proved to be a well-ordered government. Liberty was dead long before Cæsar aimed at supremacy. It was dead when individuals like Sylla and Marius had become stronger than the laws; and the death of Cæsar was, therefore, but the prelude to fresh disasters, and to the ultimate investiture with absolute power of whoever, among the competitors for it, should come triumphantly out of what was sure to be a protracted and a sanguinary struggle. In what state did Horace find Italy after his return from Philippi? Drenched

in the blood of its citizens, desolated by pillage, harassed by daily fears of internecine conflict at home and of invasion from abroad, its sovereignty a stake played for by political gamblers. In such a state of things it was no longer the question, how the old Roman constitution was to be restored, but how the country itself was to be saved from ruin. Prestige was with the nephew of the Cæsar whose memory the Roman populace had almost from his death worshipped as divine; and whose conspicuous ability and address, as well as those of his friends, naturally attracted to his side the ablest survivors of the party of Brutus. The very course of events pointed to him as the future chief of the state. Lepidus, by the sheer weakness and indecision of his character, soon went to the wall; and the power of Antony was weakened by his continued absence from Rome, and ultimately destroyed by the malign influence exerted upon his character by the fascinations of the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra. The disastrous failure of his Parthian expedition (B.C. 36), and the tidings that reached Rome from time to time of the mad extravagance of his private life, of his abandonment of the character of a Roman citizen, and his assumption of the barbaric pomp and habits of an oriental despot, made men look to his great rival as the future head of the state, especially as they saw that rival devoting all his powers to the task of reconciling divisions and restoring peace to a country exhausted by a long series of civil broils, of giving security to life and property at home, and making Rome once more a name

of awe throughout the world. Was it, then, otherwise than natural that Horace, in common with many of his friends, should have been not only content to forget the past, with its bloody and painful records, but should even have attached himself cordially to the party of Augustus? Whatever the private aims of the Cæsar may have been, his public life showed that he had the welfare of his country strongly at heart, and the current of events had made it clear that he at least was alone able to end the strife of faction by assuming the virtual supremacy of the state.

Pollio, Messalla, Varus, and others of the Brutus party, have not been denounced as renegades because they arrived at a similar conclusion, and lent the whole influence of their abilities and their names to the cause of Augustus. Horace has not been so fortunate; and because he has expressed,—what was no doubt the prevailing feeling of his countrymen,—gratitude to Augustus for quelling civil strife, for bringing glory to the empire, and giving peace, security, and happiness to his country by the power of his arms and the wisdom of his administration, the poet has been called a traitor to the nobler principles of his youth—an obsequious flatterer of a man whom he ought to have denounced to posterity as a tyrant. *Adroit esclave* is the epithet applied to him in this respect by Voltaire, who idolises him as a moralist and poet. But it carries little weight in the mouth of the cynic who could fawn with more than courtierly complaisance on a Frederick or a Catherine, and weave graceful flatteries for the Pompadour, and who "dearly loved a

lord" in his practice, however he may have sneered at aristocracy in his writings. But if we put ourselves as far as we can into the poet's place, we shall come to a much more lenient conclusion. He could no doubt appreciate thoroughly the advantages of a free republic or of a purely constitutional government, and would, of course, have preferred either of these for his country. But while theory pointed in that direction, facts were all pulling the opposite way. The materials for the establishment of such a state of things did not exist in a strong middle class or an equal balance of parties. The choice lay between the anarchy of a continued strife of selfish factions, and the concentration of power in the hands of some individual who should be capable of enforcing law at home and commanding respect abroad. So at least Horace obviously thought; and surely it is reasonable to suppose that the man, whose integrity and judgment in all other matters are indisputable, was more likely than the acutest critic or historian of modern times can possibly be to form a just estimate of what was the possible best for his country, under the actual circumstances of the time.

Had Horace at once become the panegyrist of the Cæsar, the sincerity of his convictions might have been open to question. But thirteen years at least had elapsed between the battle of Philippi and the composition of the Second Ode of the First Book, which is the first direct acknowledgment by Horace of Augustus as the chief of the state. This Ode is directly inspired by gratitude for the cessation of civil

strife, and the skilful administration which had brought things to the point when the whole fighting force of the kingdom, which had so long been wasted in that strife, could be directed to spreading the glory of the Roman name, and securing its supremacy throughout its conquered provinces. The allusions to Augustus in this and others of the earlier Odes are somewhat cold and formal in their tone. There is a visible increase in glow and energy in those of a later date, when, as years went on, the Cæsar established fresh claims on the gratitude of Rome by his firm, sagacious, and moderate policy, by the general prosperity which grew up under his administration, by the success of his arms, by the great public works which enhanced the splendour and convenience of the capital, by the restoration of the laws, and by his zealous endeavour to stem the tide of immorality which had set in during the protracted disquietudes of the civil wars. It is true that during this time Augustus was also establishing the system of Imperialism, which contained in itself the germs of tyranny, with all its brutal excesses on the one hand, and its debasing influence upon the subject nation on the other. But we who have seen into what it developed must remember that these baneful fruits of the system were of lengthened growth; and Horace, who saw no farther into the future than the practical politicians of his time, may be forgiven if he dwelt only upon the immediate blessings which the government of Augustus effected, and the peace and security which came with a tenfold welcome after the long agonies of the civil wars.

The glow and sincerity of feeling of which we have spoken are conspicuous in the following Ode (IV. 2), addressed to Iulus Antonius, the son of the triumvir, of whose powers as a poet nothing is known beyond the implied recognition of them contained in this Ode. The Sicambri, with two other German tribes, had crossed the Rhine, laid waste part of the Roman territory in Gaul, and inflicted so serious a blow on Lollius, the Roman legate, that Augustus himself repaired to Gaul to retrieve the defeat and resettle the province. This he accomplished triumphantly (B.C. 17); and we may assume that the Ode was written while the tidings of his success were still fresh, and the Romans, who had been greatly agitated by the defeat of Lollius, were looking eagerly forward to his return. Apart from its other merits, the Ode is interesting from the estimate Horace makes in it of his own powers, and his avowal of the labour which his verses cost him.

"Iulus, he who'd rival Pindar's fame,
On waxen wings doth sweep
The Empyréan steep,
To fall like Icarus, and with his name
Endue the glassy deep.

"Like to a mountain stream, that roars
From bank to bank along,
When Autumn rains are strong,
So deep-mouthed Pindar lifts his voice, and pours
His fierce tumultuous song.

"Worthy Apollo's laurel wreath,
Whether he strike the lyre
To love and young desire,

While bold and lawless numbers grow beneath
His mastering touch of fire ;

" Or sings of gods, and monarchs sprung
Of gods, that overthrew
The Centaurs, hideous crew,
And, fearless of the monster's fiery tongue,
The dread Chimæra slew ;

" Or those the Eléan palm doth lift
To heaven, for wingèd steed,
Or sturdy arm decreed,
Giving, than hundred statues nobler gift,
The poet's deathless meed ;

" Or mourns the youth snatched from his bride,
Extols his manhood clear,
And to the starry sphere
Exalts his golden virtues, scattering wide
The gloom of Orcus drear.

" When the Dircéan swan doth climb
Into the azure sky,
There poised in ether high,
He courts each gale, and floats on wing sublime,
Soaring with steadfast eye.

" I, like the tiny bee, that sips
The fragrant thyme, and strays
Humming through leafy ways,
By Tibur's sedgy banks, with trembling lips
Fashion my toilsome lays.

" But thou, when up the sacred steep
Cæsar, with garlands crowned,
Leads the Sicambrians bound,
With bolder hand the echoing strings shalt sweep,
And bolder measures sound.

"Cæsar, than whom a nobler son
The Fates and Heaven's kind powers
Ne'er gave this earth of ours,
Nor e'er will give though backward time should run
To its first golden hours.

"Thou too shalt sing the joyful days,
The city's festive throng,
When Cæsar, absent long,
At length returns,—the Forum's silent ways,
Serene from strife and wrong.

"Then, though in statelier power it lack,
My voice shall swell the lay,
And sing, 'Oh, glorious day,
Oh, day thrice blest, that gives great Cæsar back
To Rome, from hostile fray!'

"'Io Triumphe!' thrice the cry;
'Io Triumphe!' loud
Shall shout the echoing crowd
The city through, and to the gods on high
Raise incense like a cloud.

"Ten bulls shall pay thy sacrifice,
With whom ten kine shall bleed:
I to the fane will lead
A yearling of the herd, of modest size,
From the luxuriant mead,

"Horned like the moon, when her pale light
Which three brief days have fed,
She trimmeth, and dispread
On his broad brows a spot of snowy white,
All else a tawny red."

Augustus did not return from Gaul, as was expected when this Ode was written, but remained there for

about two years. That this protracted absence caused no little disquietude in Rome is apparent from the following Ode (IV. 5) :—

"From gods benign descended, thou
Best guardian of the fates of Rome,
Too long already from thy home
Hast thou, dear chief, been absent now ;

"Oh, then return, the pledge redeem,
Thou gav'st the Senate, and once more
Its light to all the land restore ;
For when thy face, like spring-tide's gleam,

"Its brightness on the people sheds,
Then glides the day more sweetly by,
A brighter blue pervades the sky,
The sun a richer radiance spreads !

"As on her boy the mother calls,
Her boy, whom envious tempests keep
Beyond the vexed Carpathian deep,
From his dear home, till winter falls,

"And still with vow and prayer she cries,
Still gazes on the winding shore,
So yearns the country evermore
For Cæsar, with fond, wistful eyes.

"For safe the herds range field and fen,
Full-headed stand the shocks of grain,
Our sailors sweep the peaceful main,
And man can trust his fellow-men.

"No more adulterers stain our beds,
Laws, morals, both that taint efface,
The husband in the child we trace,
And close on crime sure vengeance treads.

"The Parthian, under Cæsar's reign,
Or icy Scythian, who can dread,
Or all the tribes barbarian bred
By Germany, or ruthless Spain?

"Now each man, basking on his slopes,
Weds to his widowed trees the vine,
Then, as he gaily quaffs his wine,
Salutes thee god of all his hopes;

"And prayers to thee devoutly sends,
With deep libations; and, as Greece
Ranks Castor and great Hercules,
Thy godship with his Lares blends.

"Oh, may'st thou on Hesperia shine,
Her chief, her joy, for many a day!
Thus, dry-lipped, thus at morn we pray,
Thus pray at eve, when flushed with wine."

"It was perhaps the policy of Augustus," says Macleane, "to make his absence felt; and we may believe that the language of Horace, which bears much more the impress of real feeling than of flattery, represented the sentiments of great numbers at Rome, who felt the want of that presiding genius which had brought the city through its long troubles, and given it comparative peace. There could not be a more comprehensive picture of security and rest obtained through the influence of one mind than is represented in this Ode, if we except that with which no merely mortal language can compare (Isaiah, xi. and lxv.; Micah, iv.)"

We must not assume, from the reference in this and other Odes to the divine origin of Augustus, that this was seriously believed in by Horace, any more than it was by Augustus himself. Popular credulity

ascribed divine honours to great men; and this was the natural growth of a religious system in which a variety of gods and demigods played so large a part. Julius Cæsar claimed—no doubt, for the purpose of impressing the Roman populace—a direct descent from *Alma Venus Genitrix*, as Antony did from Hercules. Altars and temples were dedicated to great statesmen and generals; and the Romans, among the other things which they borrowed from the East, borrowed also the practice of conferring the honours of apotheosis upon their rulers,—the visible agents, in their estimation, of the great invisible power that governed the world. To speak of their divine descent and attributes became part of the common forms of the poetical vocabulary, not inappropriate to the exalted pitch of lyrical enthusiasm. Horace only falls into the prevailing strain, and is not compromising himself by servile flattery, as some have thought, when he speaks in this Ode of Augustus as "from gods benign descended," and in others as "the heaven-sent son of Maia" (I. 2), or as reclining among the gods and quaffing nectar "with lip of deathless bloom" (III. 3). In lyrical poetry all this was quite in place. But when the poet contracts his wings, and drops from its empyrean to the level of the earth, he speaks to Augustus and of him simply as he thought (Epistles, II. 1)—as a man on whose shoulders the weight of empire rested, who protected the commonwealth by the vigour of his armies, and strove to grace it by "sweeter manners, purer laws." He adds, it is true,—

" You while in life are honoured as divine,
And vows and oaths are taken at your shrine ;
So Rome pays honour to her man of men,
Ne'er seen on earth before, ne'er to be seen again "—(C.)

but this is no more than a statement of a fact. Altars were erected to Augustus, much against his will, and at these men made their prayers or plighted their oaths every day. There is not a word to imply either that Augustus took these divine honours, or that Horace joined in ascribing them, seriously.

It is of some importance to the argument in favour of Horace's sincerity and independence, that he had no selfish end to serve by standing well with Augustus. We have seen that he was more than content with the moderate fortune secured to him by Mæcenas. Wealth had no charms for him. His ambition was to make his mark as a poet. His happiness lay in being his own master. There is no trace of his having at any period been swayed by other views. What then had he to gain by courting the favour of the head of the state? But the argument goes further. When Augustus found the pressure of his private correspondence too great, as his public duties increased, and his health, never robust, began to fail, he offered Horace the post of his private secretary. The poet declined on the ground of health. He contrived to do so in such a way as to give no umbrage by the refusal ; nay, the letters which are quoted in the life of Horace ascribed to Suetonius show that Augustus begged the poet to treat him on the same footing as if he had accepted the office, and actually become a member of

his household. "Our friend Septimius," he says in another letter, "will tell you how much you are in my thoughts; for something led to my speaking of you before him. Neither, if you were too proud to accept my friendship, do I mean to deal with you in the same spirit." There could have been little of the courtier in the man who was thus addressed. Horace apparently felt that Augustus and himself were likely to be better friends at a distance. He had seen enough of court life to know how perilous it is to that independence which was his dearest possession. "*Dulcis inexpertis cultura potentis amici,—Expertus metuit,*" is his ultimate conviction on this head (Epistles, I. 18)—

> "Till time has made us wise, 'tis sweet to wait
> Upon the smiles and favour of the great;
> But he that once has ventured that career
> Shrinks from its perils with instinctive fear."

In another place (Epistles, I. 10) he says, "*Fuge magna; licet sub paupere tecto Reges et regum vita præcurrere amicos*"—

> "Keep clear of courts; a homely life transcends
> The vaunted bliss of monarchs and their friends." (C.)

But apart from such considerations, life would have lost its charm for Horace, had he put himself within the trammels of official service. At no time would these have been tolerable to him; but as he advanced into middle age, the freedom of entire independence, the refreshing solitudes of the country, leisure for study

and reflection, became more and more precious to him. The excitements and gaieties and social enjoyments of Rome were all very well, but a little of them went a great way. They taxed his delicate health, and they interfered with the graver studies, to which he became daily more inclined as the years went by. Not all his regard for Mæcenas himself, deep as it was, could induce him to stay in town to enliven the leisure hours of the statesman by his companionship at the expense of those calm seasons of communion with nature and the books of the great men of old, in which he could indulge his irresistible craving for some solution of the great problems of life and philosophy. Men like Mæcenas, whose power and wealth are practically unbounded, are apt to become importunate even in their friendships, and to think that everything should give way to the gratification of their wishes. Something of this spirit had obviously been shown towards Horace. Mæcenas may have expressed himself in a tone of complaint, either to the poet himself, or in some way that had reached his ears, about his prolonged absence in the country, which implied that he considered his bounties had given him a claim upon the time of Horace which was not sufficiently considered. This could only have been a burst of momentary impatience, for the nature of Mæcenas was too generous to admit of any other supposition. But Horace felt it; and with the utmost delicacy of tact, but with a decision that left no room for mistake, he lost no time in letting Mæcenas know, that rather than brook control upon his movements, however

slight, he will cheerfully forego the gifts of his friend, dear as they are, and grateful for them as he must always be. To this we owe the following Epistle (I. 7). That Mæcenas loved his friend all the better for it—he could scarcely respect him more than he seems to have done from the first—we may be very sure.

Only five days, I said, I should be gone ;
Yet August's past, and still I linger on.
'Tis true I've broke my promise. But if you
Would have me well, as I am sure you do,
Grant me the same indulgence, which, were I
Laid up with illness, you would not deny,
Although I claim it only for the fear
Of being ill, this deadly time of year,
When autumn's clammy heat and early fruits
Deck undertakers out, and inky mutes ;
When young mammas, and fathers to a man,
With terrors for their sons and heirs are wan ;
When stifling anteroom, or court, distils
Fevers wholesale, and breaks the seals of wills.
Should winter swathe the Alban fields in snow,
Down to the sea your poet means to go,
To nurse his ailments, and, in cosy nooks
Close huddled up, to loiter o'er his books.
But once let zephyrs blow, sweet friend, and then,
If then you'll have him, he will quit his den,
With the first swallow hailing you again.
When you bestowed on me what made me rich,
Not in the spirit was it done, in which
Your bluff Calabrian on a guest will thrust
His pears : "Come, eat, man, eat—you can, you must!"
"Indeed, indeed, my friend, I've had enough."
"Then take some home!" "You're too obliging." "Stuff!

If you have pockets full of them, I guess,
Your little lads will like you none the less."
"I really can't—thanks all the same!" "You won't?
Why then the pigs shall have them, if you don't."
'Tis fools and prodigals, whose gifts consist
Of what they spurn, or what is never missed:
Such tilth will never yield, and never could,
A harvest save of coarse ingratitude.
A wise good man is evermore alert,
When he encounters it, to own desert;
Nor is he one, on whom you'd try to pass
For sterling currency mere lackered brass.
For me, 'twill be my aim myself to raise
Even to the flattering level of your praise;
But if you'd have me always by your side,
Then give me back the chest deep-breathed and wide,
The low brow clustered with its locks of black,
The flow of talk, the ready laugh, give back,
The woes blabbed o'er our wine, when Cinara chose
To teaze me, cruel flirt—ah, happy woes!
Through a small hole a field-mouse, lank and thin,
Had squeezed his way into a barley bin,
And, having fed to fatness on the grain,
Tried to get out, but tried and squeezed in vain.
"Friend," cried a weasel, loitering thereabout,
"Lean you went in, and lean you must get out."
Now, at my head if folks this story throw,
Whate'er I have I'm ready to forego;
I am not one, with forced meats in my throat,
Fine saws on poor men's dreamless sleep to quote.
Unless in soul as very air I'm free,
Not all the wealth of Araby for me.
You've ofttimes praised the reverent, yet true
Devotion, which my heart has shown for you.
King, father, I have called you, nor been slack
In words of gratitude behind your back;

But even your bounties, if you care to try,
You'll find I can renounce without a sigh.
Not badly young Telemachus replied,
Ulysses' son, that man so sorely tried:
"No mettled steeds in Ithaca we want;
The ground is broken there, the herbage scant.
Let me, Atrides, then, thy gifts decline,
In thy hands they are better far than mine!"
Yes, little things fit little folks. In Rome
The Great I never feel myself at home.
Let me have Tibur, and its dreamful ease,
Or soft Tarentum's nerve-relaxing breeze.
Philip, the famous counsel, on a day—
A burly man, and wilful in his way—
From court returning, somewhere about two,
And grumbling, for his years were far from few,
That the Carinæ* were so distant, though
But from the Forum half a mile or so,
Descried a fellow in a barber's booth,
All by himself, his chin fresh shaved and smooth,
Trimming his nails, and with the easy air
Of one uncumbered by a wish or care.
"Demetrius!"—'twas his page, a boy of tact,
In comprehension swift, and swift in act,
"Go, ascertain his rank, name, fortune; track
His father, patron!" In a trice he's back.
"An auction-crier, Volteius Mena, sir,
Means poor enough, no spot on character,
Good or to work or idle, get or spend,
Has his own house, delights to see a friend,
Fond of the play, and sure, when work is done,
Of those who crowd the Campus to make one."

* The street where he lived, or, as we should say, "Ship Street." The name was due probably to the circumstance of models of ships being set up in it.

"I'd like to hear all from himself. Away,
Bid him come dine with me—at once—to-day!"
Mena some trick in the request divines,
Turns it all ways, then civilly declines.
"What! Says me nay?" "'Tis even so, sir. Why?
Can't say. Dislikes you, or, more likely, shy."
Next morning Philip searches Mena out,
And finds him vending to a rabble rout
Old crazy lumber, frippery of the worst,
And with all courtesy salutes him first.
Mena pleads occupation, ties of trade,
His service else he would by dawn have paid,
At Philip's house,—was grieved to think, that how
He should have failed to notice him till now.
"On one condition I accept your plea.
You come this afternoon, and dine with me."
"Yours to command." "Be there, then, sharp at four!
Now go, work hard, and make your little more!"
At dinner Mena rattled on, expressed
Whate'er came uppermost, then home to rest.
The hook was baited craftily, and when
The fish came nibbling ever and again,
At morn a client, and, when asked to dine,
Not now at all in humour to decline,
Philip himself one holiday drove him down,
To see his villa some few miles from town.
Mena keeps praising up, the whole way there,
The Sabine country, and the Sabine air;
So Philip sees his fish is fairly caught,
And smiles with inward triumph at the thought.
Resolved at any price to have his whim,—
For that is best of all repose to him,—
Seven hundred pounds he gives him there and then,
Proffers on easy terms as much again,
And so persuades him, that, with tastes like his,
He ought to buy a farm;—so bought it is.

Not to detain you longer than enough,
The dapper cit becomes a farmer bluff,
Talks drains and subsoils, ever on the strain
Grows lean, and ages with the lust of gain.
But when his sheep are stolen, when murrains smite
His goats, and his best crops are killed with blight,
When at the plough his oxen drop down dead,
Stung with his losses, up one night from bed
He springs, and on a cart-horse makes his way,
All wrath, to Philip's house, by break of day.
"How's this?" cries Philip, seeing him unshorn
And shabby. "Why, Vulteius, you look worn.
You work, methinks, too long upon the stretch."
"Oh, that's not it, my patron. Call me wretch!
That is the only fitting name for me.
Oh, by thy Genius, by the gods that be
Thy hearth's protectors, I beseech, implore,
Give me, oh, give me back my life of yore!"
If for the worse you find you've changed your place,
Pause not to think, but straight your steps retrace.
In every state the maxim still is true,
On your own last take care to fit your shoe!

CHAPTER X.

DELICACY OF HORACE'S HEALTH.—HIS CHEERFULNESS.—LOVE OF BOOKS. — HIS PHILOSOPHY PRACTICAL. — EPISTLE TO AUGUSTUS. —DEATH.

HORACE had probably passed forty when the Epistle just quoted was written. Describing himself at forty-four (Epistles, I. 20), he says he was "prematurely grey,"—his hair, as we have just seen (p. 185), having been originally black,—adding that he is

> "In person small, one to whom warmth is life,
> In temper hasty, yet averse from strife."

His health demanded constant care; and we find him writing (Epistles, I. 15) to a friend, to ask what sort of climate and people are to be found at Velia and Salernum,—the one a town of Lucania, the other of Campania,—as he has been ordered by his doctor to give up his favourite watering-place, Baiæ, as too relaxing. This doctor was Antonius Musa, a great apostle of the cold-water cure, by which he had saved the life of Augustus when in extreme danger. The remedy instantly became fashionable, and continued

so until the Emperor's nephew, the young Marcellus, died under the treatment. Horace's inquiries are just such as a valetudinarian fond of his comforts would be likely to make :—

"Which place is best supplied with corn, d'ye think ?
Have they rain-water or fresh springs to drink ?
Their wines I care not for, when at my farm
I can drink any sort without much harm ;
But at the sea I need a generous kind
To warm my veins, and pass into my mind,
Enrich me with new hopes, choice words supply,
And make me comely in a lady's eye.
Which tract is best for game ? on which sea-coast
Urchins and other fish abound the most ?
That so, when I return, my friends may see
A sleek Phæacian * come to life in me :
These things you needs must tell me, Vala dear,
And I no less must act on what I hear." (C.)

Valetudinarian though he was, Horace maintains, in his later as in his early writings, a uniform cheerfulness. This never forsakes him ; for life is a boon for which he is ever grateful. The gods have allotted him an ample share of the means of enjoyment, and it is his own fault if he suffers self-created worries or desires to vex him. By the questions he puts to a friend in one of the latest of his Epistles (II. 2), we see what was the discipline he applied to himself—

"You're not a miser : has all other vice
Departed in the train of avarice ?
Or do ambitious longings, angry fret,
The terror of the grave, torment you yet ?

* The Phæacians were proverbially fond of good living.

Can you make sport of portents, gipsy crones,
Hobgoblins, dreams, raw head and bloody bones?
Do you count up your birthdays year by year,
And thank the gods with gladness and blithe cheer,
O'erlook the failings of your friends, and grow
Gentler and better as your sand runs low?" (C.)

And to this beautiful catalogue of what should be a good man's aims, let us add the picture of himself which Horace gives us in another and earlier Epistle (I. 18):—

"For me, when freshened by my spring's pure cold,
Which makes my villagers look pinched and old,
What prayers are mine? 'O may I yet possess
The goods I have, or, if heaven pleases, less!
Let the few years that Fate may grant me still
Be all my own, not held at others' will!
Let me have books, and stores for one year hence,
Nor make my life one flutter of suspense!'
But I forbear; sufficient 'tis to pray
To Jove for what he gives and takes away;
Grant life, grant fortune, for myself I'll find
That best of blessings—a contented mind." (C.)

"Let me have books!" These play a great part in Horace's life. They were not to him, what Montaigne calls them, "a languid pleasure," but rather as they were to Wordsworth—

"A substantial world, both fresh and good,
Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness may grow."

Next to a dear friend, they were Horace's most cherished companions. Not for amusement merely, and

the listless luxury of the self-wrapt lounger, were they prized by him, but as teachers to correct his faults, to subdue his evil propensities, to develop his higher nature, to purify his life (Epistles, I. 1), and to help him towards attaining "that best of blessings, a contented mind:"—

"Say, is your bosom fevered with the fire
Of sordid avarice or unchecked desire?
Know there are spells will help you to allay
The pain, and put good part of it away.
You're bloated by ambition? take advice;
Yon book will ease you, if you read it *thrice*.
Run through the list of faults; whate'er you be,
Coward, pickthank, spitfire, drunkard, debauchee,
Submit to culture patiently, you'll find
Her charms can humanise the rudest mind." (C.)

Horace's taste was as catholic in philosophy as in literature. He was of no school, but sought in the teachings of them all such principles as would make life easier, better, and happier: "*Condo et compono, quæ mox depromere possum*"—

"I search and search, and where I find I lay
The wisdom up against a rainy day." (C.)

He is evermore urging his friends to follow his example;—to resort like himself to these "spells,"—the *verba et voces*, by which he brought his own restless desires and disquieting aspirations into subjection, and fortified himself in the bliss of contentment. He saw they were letting the precious hours slip from their grasp,—hours that might have been so happy,

but were so weighted with disquiet and weariness; and he loved his friends too well to keep silence on this theme. We, like them, it has been admirably said,* are "possessed by the ambitions, the desires, the weariness, the disquietudes, which pursued the friends of Horace. If he does not always succeed with us, any more than with them, in curing us of these, he at all events soothes and tranquillises us in the moments which we spend with him. He augments, on the other hand, the happiness of those who are already happy; and there is not one of us but feels under obligation to him for his gentle and salutary lessons,—*verbaque et voces*,—for his soothing or invigorating balsams, as much as though this gifted physician of soul and body had compounded them specially for ourselves."

When he published the First Book of Epistles he seems to have thought the time come for him to write no more lyrics (Epistles, I. 1):—

"So now I bid my idle songs adieu,
And turn my thoughts to what is just and true." (C.)

Graver habits, and a growing fastidiousness of taste, were likely to give rise to this feeling. But a poet can no more renounce his lyre than a painter his palette; and his fine "Secular Hymn," and many of the Odes of the Fourth Book, which were written after this period, prove that, so far from suffering any decay in poetical power, he had even gained in force of con-

* Étude Morale et Littéraire sur les Epitres d'Horace; par J. A. Estienne. Paris, 1851. P. 212.

ception, and in that *curiosa felicitas*, that exquisite felicity of expression, which has been justly ascribed to him by Petronius. Several years afterwards, when writing of the mania for scribbling verse which had beset the Romans, as if, like Dogberry's reading and writing, the faculty of writing poetry came by nature, he alludes to his own sins in the same direction with a touch of his old irony (Epistles, II. 1):—

"E'en I, who vow I never write a verse,
Am found as false as Parthia, maybe worse;
Before the dawn I rouse myself and call
For pens and parchment, writing-desk, and all.
None dares be pilot who ne'er steered a craft;
No untrained nurse administers a draught;
None but skilled workmen handle workmen's tools;
But verses all men scribble, wise or fools." (C.)

Or, as Pope with a finer emphasis translates his words—

"But those who cannot write, and those who can,
All rhyme, and scrawl, and scribble to a man."

It was very well for Horace to laugh at his own inability to abstain from verse-making, but, had he been ever so much inclined to silence, his friends would not have let him rest. Some wanted an Ode, some an Epode, some a Satire (Epistles, II. 2)—

"Three hungry guests for different dishes call,
And how's one host to satisfy them all?" (C.)

And there was one friend, whose request it was not easy to deny. This was Augustus. Ten years after the

imperial power had been placed in his hands (B.C. 17) he resolved to celebrate a great national festival in honour of his own successful career. Horace was called on to write an Ode, known in his works as "The Secular Hymn," to be sung upon the occasion by twenty-seven boys and twenty-seven girls of noble birth. "The Ode," says Macleane, "was sung at the most solemn part of the festival, while the Emperor was in person offering sacrifice at the second hour of the night, on the river side, upon three altars, attended by the fifteen men who presided over religious affairs. The effect must have been very beautiful, and no wonder if the impression on Horace's feelings was strong and lasting." He was obviously pleased at being chosen for the task, and not without pride,—a very just one,—at the way it was performed. In the Ode (IV. 6), which seems to have been a kind of prelude to the "Secular Hymn," he anticipates that the virgins who chanted it will on their marriage-day be proud to recall the fact that they had taken part in this oratorio under his baton :—

"When the cyclical year brought its festival days,
My voice led the hymn of thanksgiving and praise,
So sweet, the immortals to hear it were fain,
And 'twas HORACE THE POET who taught me the strain!"

It was probably at the suggestion of Augustus, also, that he wrote the magnificent Fourth and Fourteenth Odes of the Fourth Book. These were written, however, to celebrate great national victories, and were pitched in the high key appropriate to the theme. But this was not enough for Augustus. He wanted

something more homely and human, and was envious of the friends to whom Horace had addressed the charming Epistles of the First Book, a copy of which the poet had sent to him by the hands of a friend (Epistles, I. 13), but only to be given to the Cæsar,

> "If he be well, and in a happy mood,
> And ask to have them,—be it understood."

And so he wrote to Horace—the letter is quoted by Suetonius—"Look you, I take it much amiss that none of your writings of this class are addressed to me. Are you afraid it will damage your reputation with posterity to be thought to have been one of my intimates?" Such a letter, had Horace been a vain man or an indiscreet, might have misled him into approaching Augustus with the freedom he courted. But he fell into no such error. There is perfect frankness throughout the whole of the Epistle, with which he met the Emperor's request (II. 1), but the social distance between them is maintained with an emphasis which it is impossible not to feel. The Epistle opens by skilfully insinuating that, if the poet has not before addressed the Emperor, it is that he may not be suspected of encroaching on the hours which were due to the higher cares of state :—

> "Since you, great Cæsar, singly wield the charge
> Of Rome's concerns, so manifold and large,—
> With sword and shield the commonwealth protect,
> With morals grace it, and with laws correct,—
> The bard, methinks, would do a public wrong,
> Who, having gained your ear, should keep it long." (C.)

It is not while they live, he continues, that, in the ordinary case, the worth of the great benefactors of mankind is recognised. Only after they are dead, do misunderstanding and malice give way to admiration and love. Rome, it is true, has been more just. It has appreciated, and it avows, how much it owes to Augustus. But the very same people who have shown themselves wise and just in this are unable to extend the same principle to living literary genius. A poet must have been long dead and buried, or he is nought. The very flaws of old writers are cried up as beauties by pedantic critics, while the highest excellence in a writer of the day meets with no response.

"Had Greece but been as carping and as cold
To new productions, what would now be old?
What standard works would there have been, to come
Beneath the public eye, the public thumb?" (C.)

Let us then look the facts fairly in the face; let us "clear our minds of cant." If a poem be bad in itself, let us say so, no matter how old or how famous it be; if it be good, let us be no less candid, though the poet be still struggling into notice among us.

Thanks, he proceeds, to our happy times, men are now devoting themselves to the arts of peace. "*Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit*"—"Her ruthless conqueror Greece has overcome." The Romans of the better class, who of old thought only of the triumphs of the forum, or of turning over their money profitably, are now bitten by a literary furor.

"Pert boys, prim fathers, dine in wreaths of bay,
And 'twixt the courses warble out the lay." (C.)

But this craze is no unmixed evil; for, take him all in all, your poet can scarcely be a bad fellow. Pulse and second bread are a banquet for him. He is sure not to be greedy or close-fisted; for to him, as Tennyson in the same spirit says, "Mellow metres are more than ten per cent." Neither is he likely to cheat his partner or his ward. He may cut a poor figure in a campaign, but he does the state good service at home.

"His lessons form the child's young lips, and wean
The boyish ear from words and tales unclean;
As years roll on, he moulds the ripening mind,
And makes it just and generous, sweet and kind;
He tells of worthy precedents, displays
The examples of the past to after days,
Consoles affliction, and disease allays." (C.)

Horace then goes on to sketch the rise of poetry and the drama among the Romans, glancing, as he goes, at the perverted taste which was making the stage the vehicle of mere spectacle, and intimating his own high estimate of the dramatic writer in words which Shakespeare seems to have been meant to realise:—

"That man I hold true master of his art,
Who with fictitious woes can wring my heart;
Can rouse me, soothe me, pierce me with the thrill
Of vain alarm, and, as by magic skill,
Bear me to Thebes, to Athens, where you will." (C.)

Here, as elsewhere, Horace treats dramatic writing as the very highest exercise of poetic genius; and, in

dwelling on it as he does, he probably felt sure of carrying with him the fullest sympathies of Augustus. For among his varied literary essays, the Emperor, like most dilettanti, had tried his hand upon a tragedy. Failing, however, to satisfy himself, he had the rarer wisdom to suppress it. The story of his play was that of Ajax, and when asked one day how it was getting on, he replied that his hero "had finished his career upon a sponge!"—"*Ajacem suum in spongio incubuisse.*"

From the drama Horace proceeds to speak of the more timid race of bards, who, "instead of being hissed and acted, would be read," and who, himself included, are apt to do themselves harm in various ways through over-sensitiveness or simplicity. Thus, for example, they will intrude their works on Augustus, when he is busy or tired; or wince, poor sensitive rogues, if a friend ventures to take exception to a verse; or bore him by repeating, unasked, one or other of their pet passages, or by complaints that their happiest thoughts and most highly-polished turns escape unnoticed; or, worse folly than all, they will expect to be sent for by Augustus the moment he comes across their poems, and told "to starve no longer, and go writing on." Yet, continues Horace, it is better the whole tribe should be disappointed, than that a great man's glory should be dimmed, like Alexander's, by being sung of by a second-rate poet. And wherefore should it be so, when Augustus has at command the genius of such men as Virgil and Varius? They, and they only, are the fit laureates of the Emperor's great achievements; and in

this way the poet returns, like a skilful composer, to the *motif* with which he set out—distrust of his own powers, which has restrained, and must continue to restrain, him from pressing himself and his small poetic powers upon the Emperor's notice.

In the other poems which belong to this period—the Second Epistle of the Second Book, and the Epistle to the Pisos, generally known as the *Ars Poetica*—Horace confines himself almost exclusively to purely literary topics. The dignity of literature was never better vindicated than in these Epistles. In Horace's estimation it was a thing always to be approached with reverence. Mediocrity in it was intolerable. Genius is much, but genius without art will not win immortality; "for a good poet's made, as well as born." There must be a working up to the highest models, a resolute intolerance of anything slight or slovenly, a fixed purpose to put what the writer has to express into forms at once the most beautiful, suggestive, and compact. The mere trick of literary composition Horace holds exceedingly cheap. Brilliant nonsense finds no allowance from him. Truth—truth in feeling and in thought—must be present, if the work is to have any value. "*Scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons*,"—

> "Of writing well, be sure the secret lies
> In wisdom, therefore study to be wise." (C.)

Whatever the form of composition, heroic, didactic, lyric, or dramatic, it must be pervaded by unity of feeling and design; and no style is good, or illustration

endurable, which either overlays or does not harmonise with the subject in hand.

The Epistle to the Pisos does not profess to be a complete exposition of the poet's art. It glances only at small sections of that wide theme. So far as it goes, it is all gold, full of most instructive hints for a sound critical taste and a pure literary style. It was probably meant to cure the younger Piso of that passion for writing verse which had, as we have seen, spread like a plague among the Romans, and which made a visit to the public baths a penance to critical ears,—for there the poetasters were always sure of an audience,—and added new terrors to the already sufficiently formidable horrors of the Roman banquet.* When we find an experienced critic like Horace urging young Piso, as he does, to keep what he writes by him for nine years, the conclusion is irresistible, that he hoped by that time the writer would see the wisdom of suppressing his crude lucubrations altogether. No one knew better than Horace that first-class work never wants such protracted mellowing.

Soon after this poem was written the great palace on the Esquiline lost its master. He died (B.C. 8) in the middle of the year, bequeathing his poet-friend to the care of Augustus in the words "*Horâti Flacci, ut mei, esto memor,*"—"Bear Horace in your memory as you would myself." But the legacy was not long upon

* This theory has been worked out with great ability by the late M. A. Baron, in his 'Epitre d'Horace aux Pisons sur l'Art Poétique'—Bruxelles, 1857; which is accompanied by a masterly translation and notes of great value.

the emperor's hands. Seventeen years before, Horace had written :

> "Think not that I have sworn a bootless oath;
> Yes, we shall go, shall go,
> Hand linked in hand, where'er thou leadest, both
> The last sad road below."

The lines must have rung in the poet's ears like a sad refrain. The Digentia lost its charm; he could not see its crystal waters for the shadows of Charon's rueful stream. The prattle of his loved Bandusian spring could not wean his thoughts from the vision of his other self wandering unaccompanied along that "last sad road." We may fancy that Horace was thenceforth little seen in his accustomed haunts. He who had so often soothed the sorrows of other bereaved hearts, answered with a wistful smile to the friendly consolations of the many that loved him. His work was done. It was time to go away. Not all the skill of Orpheus could recall him whom he had lost. The welcome end came sharply and suddenly; and one day, when the bleak November wind was whirling down the oak-leaves on his well-loved brook, the servants of his Sabine farm heard that they should no more see the good, cheery master, whose pleasant smile and kindly word had so often made their labours light. There was many a sad heart, too, we may be sure, in Rome, when the wit who never wounded, the poet who ever charmed, the friend who never failed, was laid in a corner of the Esquiline, close to the tomb of his "dear knight Mæcenas." He died on the

27th November B.C. 8, the kindly, lonely man, leaving to Augustus what little he possessed. One would fain trust his own words were inscribed upon his tomb, as in the supreme hour the faith they expressed was of a surety strong within his heart,—

NON OMNIS MORIAR.

END OF HORACE.

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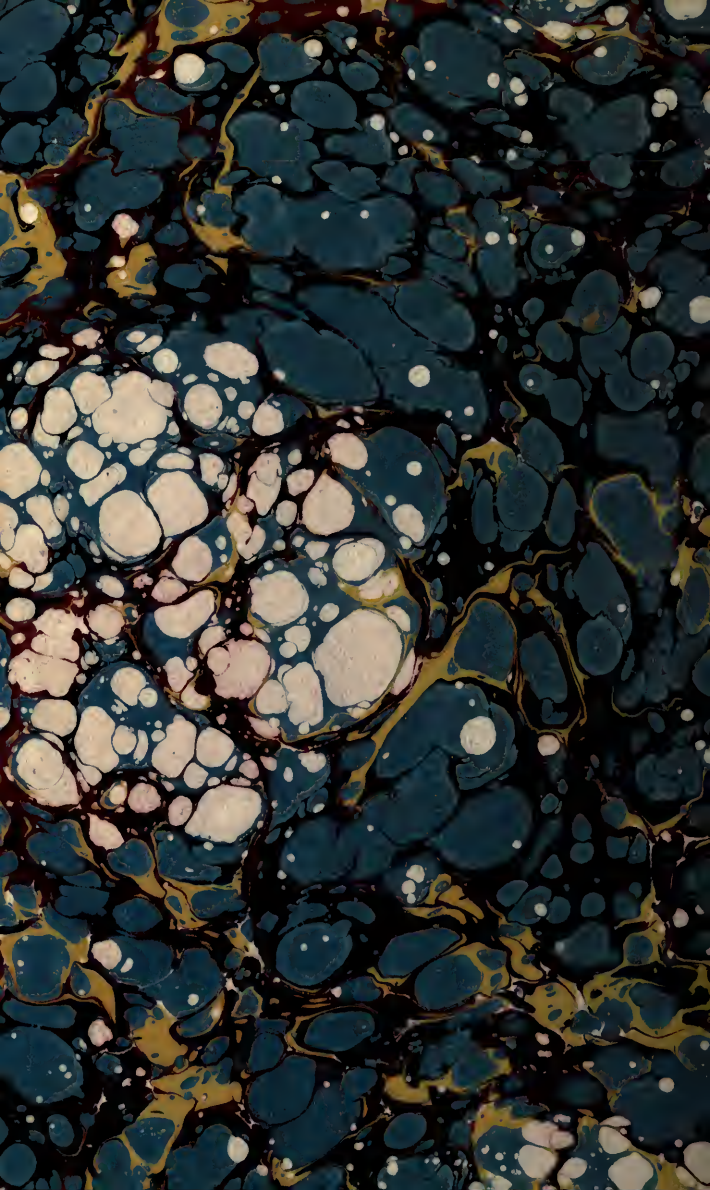

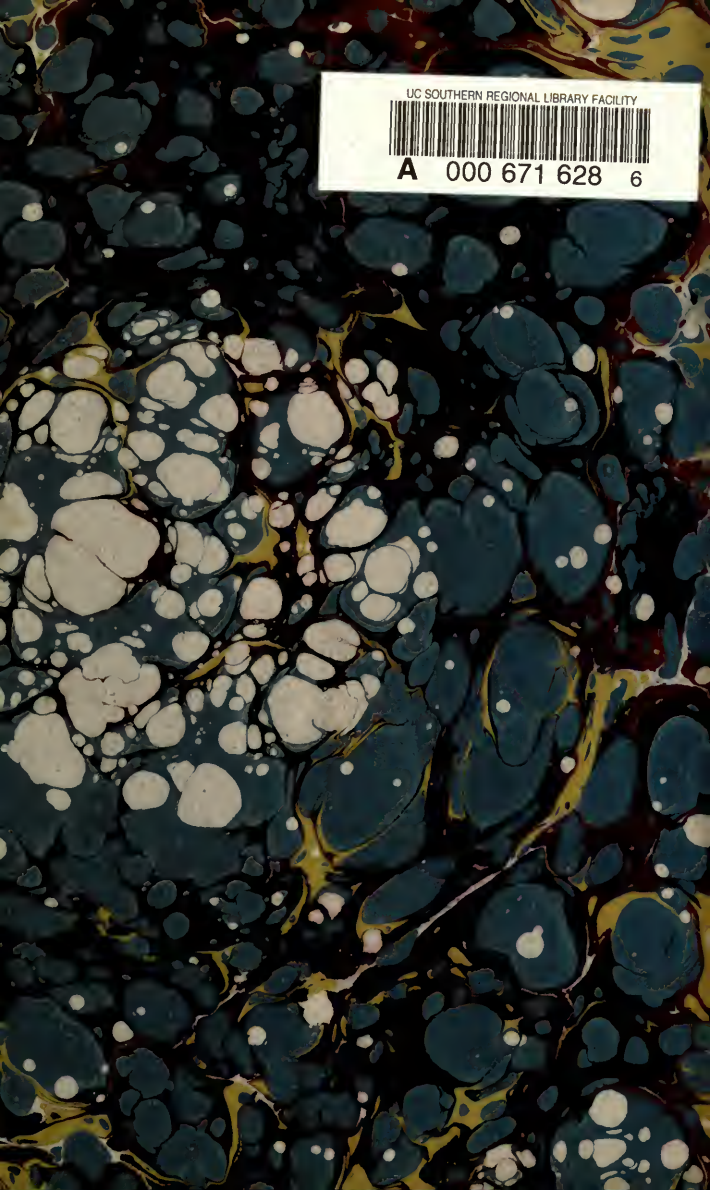
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